

THE PATTERNING OF RELATIONSHIPS
IN THE
MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN PROSE LANCELOT

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D E C L A R A T I O N

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that it was composed solely by myself.

A B S T R A C T

This thesis is a contribution to an understanding and assessment of the structural and thematic unity of the Prose Lancelot. The significance of the patterns formed by the recurrence of certain relationships in the narrative is investigated.

Introduction: The development of the Lancelot legend in medieval French and German literature and the evolution of the Arthurian prose romance are traced. A description of the Prose Lancelot within the context of the Vulgate cycle and a brief history of the OF and MHG texts are given. The classification of the MHG Prose Lancelot as a work of German literature is considered.

Chapter One: A survey of research undertaken into the structural organisation of the Prose Lancelot is presented. Particular emphasis is given to work done on the narrative techniques of interlacing and thematic development by analogy.

Chapter Two: The structural and thematic implications of establishing Galaat rather than Perceval as the Grail winner are investigated. It is demonstrated how the numerous father/son relationships in the Trilogy all contribute to an interpretation of the issues raised by the complex and questionable concept of Lancelot, an adulterer, as the father of the pure and virgin Grail knight.

Chapter Three: It is established that the primary function of the brothers and cousins of the houses of Ban and Artus is to amplify and illuminate the personalities of Lancelot and Gawan, and that loyalty to one's kin is developed as a source of tension in the narrative.

Chapter Four: It is demonstrated how Artus, Galahot, Claudas and Bandemagus form a configuration in the structure of the narrative. An analysis is made of the juxtaposition of friendships with feudal and familial relationships in the

portrayal of these rulers which makes clear the importance attached to Lancelot's friendship with Artus.

Conclusion: Issues raised by the complexities of Lancelot's relations with the King and Queen and his fathering of the Grail winner are made fundamental to the portrayal of other main protagonists in the narrative. Through the patterning of relationships which are analogous to those which define Lancelot's identity, the prose romancer suggests a positive interpretation of the ambivalence which attaches to the hero-knight.

List of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the notes and bibliography:

AfdA	: Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur
ALMA	: Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: a Collaborative History, ed. by R.S. Loomis (Oxford, 1959)
Beitr.	: Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur (Tübingen)
BBIAS	: Bibliographical Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society
CFMA	: Les Classiques Français du Moyen Age
DAI	: Dissertation Abstracts International
DTM	: Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters
DU	: Deutschunterricht
DVjs	: Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte
G	: Germania
GRLMA	: Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters, in collaboration with Jean Frappier et al., ed. by H.R. Jauss & E. Köhler, 13 vols
KFLQ	: Kentucky Foreign Language Quarterly
Med. Aev.	: Medium Aevum
MHG	: Middle High German
MPh	: Modern Philology
MSB	: Sitzungsberichte der bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in München
Neuph. Mitt.	: Neuphilologische Mitteilungen
OF	: Old French
R	: Romania
RF	: Romanische Forschungen
RPh	: Romance Philology
RR	: Romanic Review
RS	: Romanische Studien
TLF	: Textes Littéraires Français

- Vfl. : Deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters Verfasserlexikon.
Started by W. Stammer, continued by K. Langosch.
Second, completely revised edition, ed. by K. Ruh
together with G. Keil et al., (Berlin/New York,
1978-)
- WW : Wirkendes Wort
- YFSt : Yale French Studies
- ZfdA : Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum and deutsche
Literatur
- ZfdPh : Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie

Errata

On page 239 line 23, recognised should read recognised.

On page 242 line 2, Alanus Insulis should read Alanus de Insulis.

On page 263 line 19, ecoed should read echoed.

On page 278 line 26, Meleagant should read Meleagant's.

On page 308 line 4, all that good should read all that is good.

On page 276 line 23, ambiguity should read ambivalence.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The legends attached to the figures of King Arthur and his knights in the Middle Ages gave rise to a corpus of literature which is best understood as a European phenomenon.¹ Reinhold Kluge in his introduction to Volume II of his critical edition of the German Prose Lancelot claims:

Der Prosaroman ist abendländisch, und Lancelot ist kein französischer Nationalheld. Er ist ein hoher Vertreter jener Artusritterschaft, deren Tatenruhm über alle Grenzen drang.(2)

A brief outline of the development of the Lancelot legend follows in order to place the German Prose Lancelot in a European context.

THE LANCELOT LEGEND IN MEDIEVAL FRENCH AND GERMAN LITERATURE

The pseudo-historical chronicles

In his book about the figure of Gauvain in Old French literature Keith Busby comments:

A reasonably well-read layman, if asked to produce a list of characters from Arthurian legend, would probably reply thus: Arthur, Guenevere, Lancelot; Mark, Tristan, Isolde; Perceval, Galahad, and finally, perhaps, Gawain.(3)

Although Lancelot might be considered to be the most famous of the knights of the Round Table, he is not one of those who appear in the pseudo-historical chronicles which recount the events of King Arthur's reign, i.e. there is no mention of Lancelot in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia regum Britanniae (1136), nor in Wace's Le roman de Brut (1155), nor in Layamon's Brut (1189-99).⁴ It is interesting, too, that he is not among the company of Arthur's

knights depicted on the bas-reliefs of the Porta della Pescheria of the cathedral at Modena in Northern Italy, which are thought to have been executed between 1125 and 1130.⁵

The verse romances

In the world of Arthurian literature as we have it Lancelot must be considered as belonging to the continental tradition, for the authors of the Welsh Arthurian romances make no mention of him. Indeed, the figure of Lancelot has been regarded as the product of French patriotism, 'the ideal type of the French knight of the twelfth century' who was created in order to usurp 'the place of the Celtic or British hero Syr Gawain' as the best knight in the world.⁶ There appear to have been two distinct strands in the Lancelot legend and these have survived in French literature in Chrétien de Troyes' Le Chevalier de la Charrette and in German Literature in Ulrich von Zatzikhoven's Lanzelet.⁷

The fragmentary nature of many surviving manuscripts and references to written and oral sources contained in them would suggest that quite a number of works from the eleventh and twelfth centuries have been lost to us.⁸ By the time Chrétien was writing it would seem that Lancelot was already a figure of some repute.⁹ The earliest reference we have to Lancelot is in Chrétien's Erec et Enide, where he is listed as the third most important knight at Arthur's court.¹⁰ And in Le Chevalier de la Charrette Chrétien seems to expect from his audience a familiarity with the narrative outline of the tale which a modern audience no longer has, for he is not always as explicit about the underlying

causes of events and motives as he might be.

Le Chevalier de la Charrette is one of those romances which Gaston Paris defined as 'les romans épisodiques, racontant quelque aventure particulière, quelque exploit isolé du chevalier célèbre'.¹¹ The particular adventure around which this romance is constructed is the abduction of the Queen from Artus' court by Meleaganz, son of Bademaguz, King of Gorre, and her subsequent rescue by Lancelot. In the course of the romance Lancelot's great courage and fighting prowess become evident, as he is faced with and overcomes a series of hazards and opponents. The inspiration for his valiant deeds is his singleminded devotion to and love for the Queen.

Chrétien tells us that his patroness, Marie de Champagne, gave him both the 'matiere et san' of his romance.¹² Ulrich von Zatzikhoven also informs his audience in detail about who furnished him with his material.¹³ In 1192 Richard I of England was captured near Vienna by Leopold V, Duke of Austria, and handed over to the Hohenstaufen Emperor Henry VI. King Richard was ransomed in February 1194 and among the hostages who replaced him was a certain Hugh de Moreville. Hugh de Moreville had brought with him the manuscript of a romance, which friends urged Ulrich to translate into German.

Ulrich's romance is a fundamentally different work from Chrétien's Le Chevalier de la Charrette. It is not what Gaston Paris calls a 'roman épisodique' but rather what he terms a 'roman biographique'.¹⁴ Instead of relating one central adventure as

Chrétien does, Ulrich's romance recounts the events of Lanzelet's life from his childhood through to his death.¹⁵ We learn how Lanzelet's tyrannical father, King Pant of Genewis, and his wife, Clarine, were driven from their lands by a revolt of their people, how Lanzelet was brought up by a water fairy, the queen of the Meide Lande, and how he became a knight. In the course of his adventures as a knight he has a series of four love affairs, three of which end in marriage! In LANZELET Ginover, Artus' Queen, is abducted twice by King Valerîn von dem Verworrenen tan. On the first occasion Lanzelet wins her back through single combat with Valerîn, but in the second episode Lanzelet has only a minor part to play in the actual rescue of the Queen.¹⁶ There is no indication whatsoever of a love relationship between Lanzelet and Ginover, that aspect of the Lancelot legend which was to become most famous.

Although the content of Chrétien's and Ulrich's romances is radically different, close comparison has revealed that ultimately they do belong to the same legend.¹⁷ The most obvious example of this is the fact that Chrétien refers to his hero knight as Lancelot del Lac, an implicit reference to Lancelot's upbringing as we find it recounted explicitly in Ulrich's romance.¹⁸ Chrétien's Le Chevalier de la Charrette has been traditionally dated at about 1164.¹⁹ According to the information which Ulrich gives us about the provenance of his manuscript, we may assume that his LANZELET was written shortly after 1194. Unfortunately, Ulrich's source is no longer extant, but on the evidence of a linguistic study of Ulrich's text Roger Loomis concludes that it

was written in the Anglo-Norman dialect.²⁰ It is quite likely that there were various versions of the Lancelot legend in circulation at the courts of England, France and Germany.²¹ To judge from the two romances that have survived, these probably fell roughly into the two categories defined by Gaston Paris, the 'roman épisodique' and the 'roman biographique'.

Elements from both the surviving romances about Lancelot have been fused in the next extant literary record of the Lancelot legend, the Prose Lancelot of the Arthurian Vulgate Cycle.

The prose romances

There were three major stages in the literary development of the Arthurian legend in the Middle Ages. It had its beginnings with Geoffrey of Monmouth, who in his pseudo-historical chronicle, the Historia regum Britanniae (1136), gave the shadowy, legendary figure of Arthur the status of a historical personage, as a great king of the Britons. Chrétien almost certainly knew Geoffrey's history and Wace's free translation of it, Le roman de Brut (1155). However, he developed a different aspect of the legend of King Arthur in his romances. He was not so much interested in the historical personage of Arthur as in Arthur's court as a place where codes of chivalry inspired by love could be explored with regard to their ethical and social implications. The question of Chrétien's sources is a vexed one, but what is clear is that rather than drawing on historical or pseudo-historical material, he chose to turn to the world of folk-legend, in particular Celtic, as he knew it from oral and, perhaps,

written sources. Chrétien's Arthurian romances created a new and very popular literary genre which was seized upon and eagerly developed by romancers in both France and Germany.

By the end of the twelfth century and beginning of the thirteenth century there were a large number of verse romances about individual knights in existence. They were loosely linked by their common background of the court of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table. A further development in the genre of the Arthurian romance then took place. The two branches of Arthurian literature, the pseudo-historical chronicles and the verse romances, were drawn upon simultaneously by romancers. They linked the individual verse romances by welding together figures, episodes and motifs from them into a coherent narrative and encased this in a chronicle framework.

Prose and anonymity became the hallmarks of those Old French Arthurian romances which incorporated the chronicle tradition of Arthurian history, the tales of individual knights and the history of the Grail. Research into why prose should have been adopted as the medium for these romances has revealed a complex and involved interplay of various factors.²² The most salient of these are:

- 1) The plurality of theme which resulted from the interweaving of material from different kinds of sources demanded a medium of composition which could embrace much more than that developed by Chrétien.²³

- 2) The clergy had always been mistrustful of the fiction

of secular literature which they regarded as 'lies' because it was not factually true.²⁴ This hostile attitude had been considerably relaxed in the later twelfth century, during the period when the aristocratic courtly culture was developing, but it was renewed vigorously around 1200. This resumption of hostility towards fiction has been regarded to a greater or lesser extent as a contributory factor to the development of anonymous prose romances.²⁵

3) At the beginning of the thirteenth century there was a movement in historiography to employ prose rather than verse. Two reasons for this development were the association of verse with oral transmission rather than written prose documentation and the negative attitude of the clergy towards the 'lies' of fiction in verse.²⁶ That controversy over the use of verse and prose amongst historiographers undoubtedly exercised a significant influence on the development of the Arthurian prose romance is nicely evidenced by Jean de Prunay in a rhymed preface to his prose chronicle of the life of Philippe Auguste, where he comments on the use of prose to tell the story of Lancelot more truthfully than verse would allow:

Issi vos an feré le conte
Non pas rimé, qui an droit conte
Si com li livres Lancelot
Ou il n'a de rime un seul mot,
Por melz dire la verité
Et por tretier sans fauseté;
Quar anviz puet estre rimée
Estoire ou n'ait ajostée
Mensonge por fere le rime. (27)

The three romances which are generally known as the trilogy of Robert de Boron, a Burgundian knight who was writing

between the years 1191 and 1212, constitute an important link between the verse and prose romances of Old French Arthurian literature.²⁸ Robert wrote two verse romances, Joseph d'Arimathie (Roman de l'Estoire dou Graal) and Merlin, to which he gave the collective title li livres dou Graal. The verse Joseph d'Arimathie is extant, but only 502 lines of the Merlin have survived in the original verse form. Shortly after their composition both works were recast in prose, whether by Robert himself or by another is unknown. The third work which completes the trilogy is known as the Didot-Perceval or Modena Perceval, after the two manuscripts in which this work has been preserved. In the development of Arthurian literature the Didot-Perceval is significant in two respects: firstly, for the idea of intertwining the history of the Grail with the account of Arthur's death as told by Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace, and secondly, for the fact that it was composed in prose rather than recast into prose from verse as Robert's romances were. Whether Robert had planned a third romance himself is unknown, but what has been ascertained is how the anonymous author of the Didot-Perceval has skilfully linked the tale of the Grail knight to Robert's romances so that 'la trilogie du Joseph, du Merlin et du Perceval paraît l'histoire d'une promesse de Dieu transmise et matérialisée grâce à Merlin'.²⁹ This concept was to be the inspiration for a cycle of romances which were conceived on a much grander scale, that is the Arthurian Prose Vulgate Cycle.

The Prose Lancelot

In its fullest version, preserved in only six manuscripts,

the Arthurian Prose Vulgate consists of five romances:³⁰

- 1) L'Estoire del Saint Graal
- 2) L'Estoire de Merlin
- 3) Le Livre de Lancelot del Lac
- 4) Les Aventures de la Queste del Saint Graal
- 5) La Mort le Roi Artus.

The Lancelot del Lac, Queste del Saint Graal, and Mort Artu form the oldest part of the cycle. They are known collectively as the Prose Lancelot.³¹ The later additions of the Estoire del Saint Graal and the Estoire de Merlin have a prefatory function for the Prose Lancelot within the context of the cycle. The former gives an account of the early history of the Grail and links it with that of Lancelot's ancestors. The latter recounts the life of the magician Merlin and the history of Arthur's reign down to Lancelot's birth. The Prose Lancelot itself encompasses the history of Arthur's reign, the development and decline of the company of the Round Table, the history of the Grail and how the Quest for it was achieved. Within this broad canvas the focus of the narrative is determined largely by the career of Lancelot, the principal events of which are as follows.³²

The Prose Lancelot relates how Lancelot's father, King Ban, is driven from his kingdom by Claudas, king of the 'Terre Deserte', how Lancelot is brought up by the Lady of the Lake and how, when he is knighted at Arthur's Court, he falls irrevocably in love with Queen Guinevere. Once Lancelot has been knighted, the narrative follows his exploits and relates how he discovers his name in achieving the adventure of the Dolorous Gard. Galehot,

the lord of the 'Lointaines Isles' invades Arthur's Kingdom. His aggression towards Arthur is halted by the admiration he feels for Lancelot, with whom he develops a remarkable friendship. He is instrumental in bringing about the consummation of Lancelot and Guinevere's love. At the request of Guinevere, Lancelot becomes a member of the Round Table and he is successful in a great number of adventures. He is a constant and invaluable support to Arthur in his battles against invading foes. Arthur helps Lancelot to win back his patrimony from Claudas. The Quest for the Grail is initiated, but Lancelot is unsuccessful because of his sinful relationship with the Queen. It is, however, his son Galahad who is ultimately the winner of the Grail. Once the Quest for the Grail has been achieved, attention is focused on Arthur's court, where latent tensions surface and threaten the harmonious existence of the Round Table. The discovery of Lancelot's adultery with the Queen triggers off the sequence of events which disrupts the fellowship of the Round Table and causes Arthur's downfall.

The Prose Lancelot is a 'roman biographique' incorporating many 'romans épisodiques'. Painstaking research has revealed how the wealth of Arthurian literature has been plundered in order to set the account of Lancelot's life within a greater context.³³ In particular the romance draws upon both strands of the Lancelot legend, as represented in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes and Ulrich von Zatzikhoven. Chrétien's Le Chevalier de la Charrette provided the material for a central episode in the Lancelot proper. As far as available manuscripts allow us to determine, it would

seem that Le Chevalier de la Charrette is the only romance which has been incorporated in its entirety within the text of the Prose Lancelot. The prose version of the tale of the cart is a free rendering of its source.³⁴ The prose romancer has preserved the idea of Lancelot as the devoted lover of the Queen and he adheres closely to the events of Chrétien's tale. However, he is also concerned to integrate the episode fully into his romance and thus adapts the material to suit his own purposes. He rationalises and explains much that was enigmatic in his source. In his study of the cart episode in various renderings of the Lancelot legend Ernst Soudek has noted how the Old French romance shifts some of the emphasis from the events which in Chrétien's version illustrate Lancelot's services of love to those which depict Lancelot as the redeemer of Arthur's subjects held captive in Gorre.³⁵

The Prose Lancelot follows the account of Lancelot's origins, his childhood and his first departure in search of adventure as we find it related in Ulrich's Lanzelet. However, as with Chrétien's romance, the prose romancer has modified his source material. Lancelot's father is no longer a tyrant who is forced to flee his lands because of a revolt by his people, but rather he is the victim of Claudas, an aggressive and ambitious ruler, who despoils him of his lands. The importance of heredity is a constant theme in the Prose Lancelot, and thus the prose romancer probably felt it necessary for his hero knight to have an honourable father. Lancelot is no longer a relative of Arthur as Lanzelet was, and Lohû, the legitimate son of Artus and Ginover in Lanzelet has become Lohos, the illegitimate son of Arthur in

the Prose Lancelot. These modifications were probably intended to condone to some degree the adulterous relationship between Lancelot and Guinevere.³⁶ Although the Lanzelet was a significant source for the early stages of the Prose Lancelot, its influence is hardly perceptible in the rest of the romance.³⁷

Once Chrétien de Troyes had created the genre of the Arthurian romance, Germany turned constantly to France for inspiration. The Old French Prose Lancelot proved to be an immensely popular work and exercised a considerable influence on the development of the romance in France. Very shortly after its composition those parts of the Vulgate Cycle which constitute the Prose Lancelot were rendered into German. Unfortunately, we have no knowledge of who translated the text, nor for whom it was done. Hans Fromm has suggested that the political climate in Germany may have been a contributory factor in the speed with which the Prose Lancelot was translated into German:

Der Zyklus schildert in seinem letzten Teil den Untergang des mächtigen Idealreiches der (geglaubten) Geschichte. Konnte und musste er sich nicht im Bewusstsein eines deutschen Lesepublikums mit dem drohenden Ende des Staufferreiches verbinden, das allgemein als Zeitpunkt einer Weltwende empfunden wurde und den eschatologischen Strömungen der Zeit Auftrieb gab? Könnte hier der Grund für die noch zeitgenössische Übersetzungstätigkeit liegen? (38)

Where the Old French romances had been adapted into German, the Prose Lancelot was translated. Although an examination of the OF and MHG manuscripts reveals a vast number of discrepancies, by and large the MHG Prose Lancelot is:

... kein Originalwerk, auch keine schöpferische Neufassung wie die Übertragungen der Romane Chrestiens durch Hartmann und Wolfram, sondern eine im Prinzip

wortgetreue Übersetzung der altfranzösischen
Vorlage. (39)

The German text did not enjoy the popularity of its Old French source, nor did it exercise a corresponding influence on the development of Arthurian literature in Germany, for it remained the sole prose romance in German until the late Middle Ages. For this reason Wolfgang Liepe referred to it as an 'unzeitgemässes Zufallsprodukt des 13. Jahrhunderts'.⁴⁰ This assessment of the MHG Prose Lancelot has persisted. However, Joachim Heinzle has recently attempted to place the Prose Lancelot in a wider context of German literature, drawing attention to the fact that prose was being used in religious writing and in the writing of world histories. He examines the main preoccupations of these two genres and establishes thematic links between them and the content of the Prose Lancelot. His investigations lead him to conclude: 'Als Historia im bezeichneten Sinne - als geistlich-geschichtliches Werk, das seinem Verbindlichkeitsanspruch durch Gebrauch der Prosa in einer Art Formgeste kundtut - bündelt er (the Prose Lancelot) die Hauptlinien der literarischen Entwicklung der Zeit.'⁴¹

There are few surviving manuscripts of the MHG version and it was never printed as the Old French romance was. Nevertheless, before it sank into oblivion for some centuries it was reworked in the late fifteenth century by Ulrich Fûetrer. Fûetrer was a poet and painter who had an antiquarian interest in the Arthurian romances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. His friend Jakob Pûterich von Reichertshausen had a unique library containing many Arthurian romances to which Fûetrer probably had access. Fûetrer's Buch der Abenteuer, composed between the years

1473 and 1478 for Duke Albrecht IV of Bavaria, was a gigantic compilation of Arthurian romances composed in the verse form of Der Jüngere Titurel. In his treatment of his source material Fùetrer displayed little independent literary initiative; his concern was to retell and order the romances of Hartmann von Aue, Wolfram von Eschenbach and others within one framework. Prior to the composition of the Buch der Abenteuer, in about 1467, Fùetrer wrote a drastically abridged version of the Prose Lancelot.⁴² Between 1484 and 1487 he again returned to this work, recast it into verse and modified it to agree with the sequence of events as related in his Buch der Abenteuer.

The Old French Prose Lancelot

As the text of the French Prose Lancelot itself yields no precise information about the date of its composition, scholars have attempted to place the Trilogy within the relative chronology of various thirteenth century works. Ferdinand Lot proposed initially that the entire Vulgate Cycle was written between 1214 and 1227, and possibly between 1221 and 1225.⁴³ However, he later revised his opinion slightly, suggesting that the Trilogy was completed by approximately 1230.⁴⁴ Albert Pauphilet considered the date of composition of the Queste del Saint Graal to be about 1220.⁴⁵ Jean Frappier allowed a greater span of time for the completion of the compilation and suggested the following dates: the Lancelot proper 1215-1225, the Queste del Saint Graal 1225-1230 and the Mort Artu 1230-35.⁴⁶ There is now a general consensus of opinion that the French Prose Lancelot was composed between 1215 and 1230.⁴⁷

The Prose Lancelot is sometimes referred to as the pseudo-Map Cycle, for the text claims that it is the work of Walter Map. This claim has, however, been generally considered to be a fabrication. The authorship of the Trilogy has been the subject of much controversial debate and this I shall examine at the beginning of the following chapter. Although the question of authorship has not yet been (and perhaps never can be) satisfactorily resolved, there is general agreement that the three constituent parts form an artistic unit which is best understood when studied in its entirety.

That the French prose romance was popular throughout the Middle Ages is testified to by the survival of 93 MSS dating from the thirteenth century through to the fifteenth century. Some of these contain the whole Vulgate Cycle, while others are partial or fragmentary.⁴⁸ The Prose Lancelot appeared in print in the late fifteenth century and there were seven editions published between 1488 and 1533. Interest then flagged and did not revive until H.O. Sommer published his edition of the whole Cycle at the beginning of this century. Sommer's edition is in no sense a critical one, but, in the absence of an alternative, scholars were obliged to base studies of the complete Prose Lancelot on it.⁴⁹ Shortly after the appearance of Sommer's edition E. Wechssler undertook a project to produce a critical edition of the Lancelot proper. He directed a number of his students in the editing of sections of the romance as their doctoral dissertations.⁵⁰ The project was never completed and several important MSS were discovered after the publication of these editions. The

editing of the Lancelot proper was neglected for a considerable length of time, although independent critical editions of the Queste del Saint Graal and Mort Artu appeared.⁵¹ The unsatisfactory situation with regard to the Lancelot proper has recently been rectified by the publication of a critical edition by Alexandre Micha of the entire Lancelot proper.⁵² In addition, Elspeth Kennedy has produced a critical edition of the non-cyclic (French) Prose Lancelot. This is an earlier version of the first part of the Lancelot proper, which, Kennedy argues, was originally an independent work and was later worked into the longer cyclic version.⁵³

The Middle High German Prose Lancelot

The German version of the Old French romance has survived in ten manuscripts which date from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.⁵⁴ The oldest comprehensive manuscript is P (Heidelberg, Codex Palatinus Germanic. No. 147) which was probably executed around 1430. Kluge based his critical edition of the Prose Lancelot on P, taking into consideration all other German MSS and a Middle Dutch fragment. He compared his text constantly with Sommer's edition and he consulted the four sections of the Lancelot proper edited by Wechssler's pupils, Pauphilet's edition of the Queste del Saint Graal and the edition of the Mort Artu by Frappier.⁵⁵ Kluge's edition is in three volumes which correspond to the three 'books' of P as they appear in the Codex.⁵⁶ Volumes I and II comprise the Lancelot proper and Volume III the Gral-Queste and the Tod des König Artus. In the Old French MSS the Lancelot proper was frequently divided into three sections:

Galehaut, Charrette and Agravain.⁵⁷ E. Wechssler had followed the initiative of P. Paris in giving titles to the 'branches' of his critical edition which corresponded to the main event contained in the narrative of a particular branch.⁵⁸ Kluge adopted the titles of the Marburg 'branches' and used this method to divide the rest of the text into chapters. His chapter headings are thus intended to indicate the main episode of a particular narrative section, not the point at which the chapter begins.

There has been much debate and controversy about when and how the Old French Prose Lancelot was rendered into German. The manuscripts which have generated the debate are P, executed around 1430, and two fragments from the thirteenth century, the Amorbach fragment (Fürstlich Leiningensches Archiv) known as A, and the Munich fragment (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Cgm.5250, No. 5) known as M.⁶⁰ Until the early part of this century P was generally assumed to be a late medieval work, although evidence to the contrary had been emerging.⁶¹ B.J. Docen brought M to light in 1816 when he edited part of it. He dated the fragment at around 1300 and considered it to be in the Low German dialect.⁶² The whole of the fragment was published fifty years later by F. Keinz.⁶³ Otto Behaghel published in 1878 the results of a comparison he had made between M, some Old French manuscripts and P. He had concluded that: 'Die beiden deutschen Texte gehen ganz genau, fast Wort für Wort zusammen'.⁶⁴ Although Behaghel had recognised that M and P belonged to the same redaction, it was some time before scholars generally accepted this knowledge. For

example, A. Peter, the first person to publish a study which dealt exclusively with the German Lancelot texts, erroneously assigned all the MSS, including M to the fifteenth century or later.⁶⁵

It was E. Schröder who first urged scholars to revise their opinions about the value of the German Prose Lancelot as a representative of courtly literature. In 1922 he published the other fragment from the thirteenth century, the Amorbach fragment.⁶⁶ In an article written in the following year he dated A at around 1225 and regarded it as a direct translation from the Old French.⁶⁷ He established that P belonged to the same redaction as A and the measure of agreement between A and P was such as to lead Schröder to conclude that P was a faithful rendering of A, although written two hundred years later. The potential importance of P as a document belonging to the Blütezeit of courtly literature led him to call for it to be edited and published. He repeated his plea in 1932.⁶⁸ Eventually Kluge took up the challenge and produced his critical edition of the Prose Lancelot over a span of 26 years.

The claim for the early date which Schröder and Kluge attributed to the source of P was questioned very shortly after the appearance of Kluge's first volume by Pentti Tilvis.⁶⁹ The Low German features which Keinz, Behaghel and others had recognised in M had caused it to be regarded as an offshoot of the Upper German redaction, represented by A and P. Tilvis, however, drew M into the centre of the debate, for a closer examination identified the dialect more closely as Ripuarian, a dialect directly exposed to Dutch influences. Tilvis argued that A belongs to the late thirteenth century and that M is the older

text (c. 1230). He conjectured that the archetype of P was a Dutch translation, no longer extant, of the Old French. This Dutch text was translated into the Ripuarian dialect, represented by M, which provided the source for the Upper German version of P.⁷⁰ The arguments which Tilvis employed to substantiate his conjectures were convincing enough to be accepted by many scholars and caused Kluge himself to question the basis on which he had undertaken to edit P.⁷¹ A more recent examination has, however, called Tilvis's own findings into question. H.-H. Steinhoff has produced evidence to suggest that M is not as old a manuscript as Tilvis would have it and he observes that, because Tilvis had argued that A derived directly from M, the 'Stellung von A in der Überlieferungsgeschichte des Prosa-Lancelot ist noch einmal zu überdenken'.⁷²

Although there is controversy over the more precise dating of A and M, there is a broad consensus of opinion that both manuscripts belong to the thirteenth century. This agreement supports the case for believing in the antiquity of P I, but it can be of no help where P II is concerned, for the contents of P II exist only in manuscripts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There is a puzzling lacuna between P I and P II, for which the text offers no explanation. P I breaks off mid-sentence and P II begins in the middle of an adventure other than the one which concludes P I. Kluge estimated that, by comparison with the Old French, there is about one tenth of the romance missing. He reconstructed the missing section by drawing on two fragmentary MSS, k (Cologne Stadtarchiv No. 16: W.f.^o46* Blankenheim) and

R (Rotterdam Gemeentebibliotheek), and summarising from Sommer's edition of the Old French Prose Lancelot.⁷³ Steinhoff has offered an interesting theory for the occurrence of this lacuna. The difference in the language and the quality of the translation between P I on the one hand and P II on the other has led him to suggest that if we assume that the translation into German was done all at the same time, then the translator was using different source manuscripts for P I and P II. Steinhoff develops this idea further and suggests that there could have been an interval of time between the translation of P I and P II. He takes the force of Tilvis's arguments into account and thus believes it possible that P I was translated in the middle of the thirteenth century via Dutch and P II in the late thirteenth or even early fourteenth century directly from (a not very good) Old French manuscript.⁷⁴ Tilvis answered Steinhoff by insisting on the Dutch influence in P II also.⁷⁵ However, the evidence which Tilvis promised as substantiation for his contention has not been forthcoming.

Although the controversy about the date and provenance of the MHG Prose Lancelot has not yet been settled, this has not prevented Germanists from answering Kluge's call to undertake research based on his edition:

Mit 'Lancelot III' liegt der Text des ersten deutschen Prosaromans abgeschlossen vor. Damit ist der unerlässliche philologische Grundstein gelegt für die nun dringliche sprachliche und literarische Erschliessung, die bei dem für das 13. Jahrhundert einmaligen Genre eines deutschen Prosaromans besonderen Gewinn verspricht. (76)

However, there is some disquiet amongst scholars about the extent to which the MHG Prose Lancelot, a translation of an Old French

text, may be considered a work of German literature and thus, whether it can be regarded as a proper subject for literary analysis.⁷⁷ For this reason, now that I have traced the origins of the MHG Prose Lancelot, I feel it is necessary to attempt a description and definition of it as a work of German literature.

THE TRANSMISSION AND TRANSLATION OF THE PROSE LANCELOT

One of the editor's main objectives when producing a critical edition of a medieval work of literature is to produce a text which is as close as possible to the uncorrupted source and in doing so to establish a stemma for extant MSS. The length of the romance, the wealth of MSS and the fragmentary nature of many of these meant that Kennedy and Micha were faced with a formidable task when they set about editing the non-cyclic and cyclic Lancelot proper. After a thorough examination of the MSS both reached the conclusion that it was impossible to draw up an accurate stemma for the Prose Lancelot:

An examination of the manuscripts has shown that it is clearly vain to seek to produce, without falsifying reality, a neat orderly stemma with families which behave consistently within their own group and in their relationship with other groups. (78)

The attempts of scholars to recover the original romance should not discredit the validity of variant MSS. An appreciation of the Prose Lancelot must take into account the nature of the production of works of literature and their circulation in the Middle Ages. The familiar and accepted *twentieth century* literary concepts of originality, authorial sovereignty and copyright must be set aside.

In general terms there were three stages in the production of a romance. The romancer discovered his source material, he shaped it to suit his own artistic purpose, and then the romance was circulated through the copying of manuscripts by scribes. The scribes were, however, not simply copyists, for they frequently displayed an independent attitude to their task. They would correct, modify and alter the text in a minor way as they saw fit, consequently passing on to their readers their own understanding of the work. At the end of some observations about scribal activity in the Prose Lancelot MSS Kennedy concludes:

This history of the Prose Lancelot text is, therefore, not one of passive transmission. While not true redactors, for they have not fundamentally remodelled the text, the scribes were often "editors" in the sense that they seem to have aimed at producing a text which would be agreeable to their readers. They felt free to make any alterations which would in their eyes improve the text. (79)

The Arthurian romances sprang from and generated a common consciousness about the figure of Arthur and the deeds of his illustrious knights. From the outset Arthurian romances had claimed that their works were an expression of a familiar and popular tradition. One of the salient features of the verse romance became the insistence on the use of and adherence to a source. There were complex reasons for this, but one of the intentions was to create a sense of the veracity of the events related in the romance.⁸⁰ The 'veracity' of the verse romances was developed further in the prose romances, where many features of the individual tales of Arthurian knights were fused together and recast within a chronicle framework.⁸¹ The timeless world of

the verse romances was superseded by a world which was subject to the laws of history. The prose romances became the historical inheritance of their readers and the identity of the author disappeared behind the persona of the objective chronicler. As Uwe Ruberg comments: 'Der Erzähler steht selbst unter der Autorität der historia und sieht sich nur als ihren Mittler an'.⁸²

The Prose Lancelot purports to be the transcription and translation by Walter Map of the adventures of Arthur's knights, as Arthur had them recorded by his clerks.⁸³ This claim to historicity, the absence of the original author's identity, the concept of Walter Map as the second transmitter of the histories of Arthur's knights, together with the familiarity of the source material, probably encouraged readers to regard the work as a common heritage, and may for this reason have made the text more liable to minor modification as it passed through the hands of scribes. That the Prose Lancelot was a text particularly susceptible of scribal intervention has been established by the thorough examination of the MSS undertaken by Kennedy. She suggests three reasons why this should have been so:⁸⁴

1) It is easier to make alterations and additions to a work in vernacular prose than it is to a verse romance where rhyme and scansion have to be taken into account.

2) The technique of interlacing⁸⁵ creates a narrative structure which facilitates interpolations, adaptations and even omissions.

3) The popularity of the Prose Lancelot extended over a span of 300 years. In that time it was frequently modified and revised to suit contemporary tastes.

Many of the Old French Arthurian verse romances were adapted into German. The German romancer ostensibly sought to remain true to his source while shaping the material to illustrate the meaning of the tale as he understood it.⁸⁶ However, it is an interesting aspect of the Lancelot legend in German literature that both extant works are translations rather than adaptations. Ulrich von Zatzikhoven tells us:

daz er tihten begunde
in tiutsche, als er kunde,
diz lange vremde maere (ll. 9345-7).

However, in the absence of Hugh de Moreville's manuscript we cannot know to what extent Ulrich translated and to what extent he retold his source. The Prose Lancelot was the only Old French Arthurian prose romance to be adopted into German literature and, as I mentioned above, comparison of the MHG text with the OF has revealed the former to be a close translation of the latter. This translation into German may be interpreted as being much in keeping with the spirit of the work, for it can be regarded as a continuation of that activity ascribed to Walter Map.

Ruberg has drawn attention to the fact that the German narrator identifies himself with his audience when referring to his source, where the French narrator had maintained strict objectivity:

In Q ist der Abstand des Erzählers von der historia durch seine Verborgenheit, in P durch seine Gleichstellung mit dem Publikum ausgedrückt. Die Schaltsätze zeigen den gleichen Befund. Or dist li contes Q lautet in P meistens: Nu sagt uns die hystory; si se taist li contes Q erscheint in P häufig als alhie müssen wir lassen die rede. (87)

Perhaps the German translator wished to convey his acceptance of and compliance with the convention of regarding the events of the Prose Lancelot as received history, while at the same time indicating an awareness of himself as being at a remove from the original work. He translates faithfully, but by identifying himself with them, he reminds his audience obliquely that what they are reading is a translation.⁸⁸

Just as the scribes were not passive transmitters, so the German translator, or possibly translators, appeared to have an independent attitude to his task in as far as we can assess from the extant MSS. Two studies which have made a detailed comparison of the MHG and OF versions of the cart episode have yielded some interesting insights into the way in which the German translator carried out his task. In a detailed analysis of five corresponding passages from the MHG and OF texts Claire Santoni-Rozier notes that the German version is shorter than its counterpart. She observes that, though there is a general tendency towards simplification, the translator does display some initiative, most notably in the added depth of characterisation of Meleagant and the Queen.⁸⁹ Ernst Soudek goes further in his assessment of the independence of the German translator:

The "Karrenritter" is a rather close translation of the OF prose cart-episode, but a comparison of corresponding passages shows a number of subtle changes as well as a few major omissions (e.g.

the elimination of the Gawain interlude), which together contribute to heighten the religious tone already present in the source. These changes also illustrate that the MHG writer, while being less creative than his predecessor, nevertheless had a definite artistic purpose and mind of his own. (90)

It is not known from which manuscript or manuscripts the German author translated, and so comments about the independence of his rendering must remain speculative. Indeed, the Gawain adventures to which Soudek refers in the passage above occur only in the British Library MS Add. 10292-4, the MS Sommer used for his uncritical edition of the Lancelot proper. To suggest, therefore, that 'the elimination of the Gawain interlude' is evidence of creativity is to presume too much. However, the advent of Micha's critical edition of the Lancelot proper will facilitate further studies which seek to determine the extent to which the German translator imposed his understanding of the romance on the text. It could be that a close study of the method of translation might also help to throw more light on the history of the German text and on Steinhoff's thesis that an interval of time elapsed between the translation of the first part of the Lancelot proper and the rest of the Prose Lancelot.

The protean quality, vitality and continuity of the Arthurian tradition are reflected in the history of the text of the Prose Lancelot. The scribes and, in the case of the German version, the scribe-translators were faithful to the bedrock of the original romance, but they did not hesitate to exploit the potential for original variation allowed them by the conventions of the time. As a Germanist I have based my thesis on the German version of the Prose Lancelot, regarding it as a variant (and

it would seem probably an early one) of the original within the scribal tradition of the Old French manuscripts. I have consulted the Old French texts for comparative purposes on specific issues and wherever I have found the MHG text obscure. I make reference to these instances in my footnotes.

Notes to the Introduction

1. Throughout my dissertation I use the anglicised forms of the Arthurian proper names when discussing the Prose Lancelot and other romances in general terms, but when referring to a specific text I use those forms which occur in that text.
2. Lancelot, edited by R. Kluge, 3 vols., DTM 42,47,63 (Berlin, 1948,1963,1974). References to passages in Kluge's edition are given according to volume, page and line.
3. K. Busby, Gauvain in Old French Literature (Amsterdam, 1980), p. 1.
4. The principal knights mentioned in Geoffrey's chronicle who also appear in the Arthurian romances are Gawain, Kay, Ywain, Mordred and Bedevere.
5. See K.O. Brogsitter, Artusepik (Stuttgart, 1965), p. 28.
6. H.O. Sommer's introduction (p. viii) to his edition of L'Estoire del Saint Graal (Washington, 1909).
7. Christian von Troyes, Der Karrenritter (Lancelot), edited by W. Foerster (Halle, 1899; reprinted Amsterdam, 1965).
To avoid confusion I shall use the customary French title, Le Chevalier de la Charrette, to refer to Chrétien's romance.
Ulrich von Zatzikhoven, Lanzelet, edited by K.A. Hahn (Frankfurt, 1845; reprinted, with a postscript and bibliography by F. Norman, Berlin, 1965).
8. Gottfried von Strassburg, for example, refers to other versions of the Tristan legend in his romance, Tristan, edited by P. Ganz, *Deutsche Klassiker des Mittelalters*, 4 (Wiesbaden, 1978), ll. 131-34 and ll. 8605-32.
9. See L. Thorpe, The Lancelot in the Arthurian Prose Vulgate (Illinois, 1980), p. 1. Thorpe's monograph traces the origins and development of the Lancelot legend as far as the Old French Prose Lancelot.
10. Christian von Troyes, Erec und Enide, edited by W. Foerster

- (Halle, 1890; reprinted Amsterdam, 1965), ll. 1691-94.
11. G. Paris, 'Etudes sur les romans de la Table Ronde. Lancelot du Lac', R, 10 (1881), 465-96, 'I. Le Lanzelet d'Ulrich de Zatzikhoven', pp. 471-96; R, 12 (1883), 'II. Le Conte de la Charrette', 459-534.
 12. Le Chevalier de la Charrette, ll. 26-30.
 13. Lanzelet, ll. 9322-9351.
 14. Paris, 'Etudes Table Ronde', R. 10, p. 467.
 15. For a structural analysis of Ulrich's Lanzelet see W. Haug, "Das Land, von welchem niemand wiederkehrt" Mythos, Fiktion und Wahrheit in Chrétien's "Chevalier de la Charrette", im "Lanzelet" Ulrichs von Zatzikhoven und im "Lancelot" - Prosaroman (Tübingen, 1978), pp. 56-61.
 16. Lanzelet, ll. 4958-5428 and ll. 6673-7479.
 17. See K.G.T. Webster, 'Ulrich von Zatzikhoven's Welsches Buoch', Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature, 16 (1934), 203-28 (pp. 203-14); and see Haug, "Das Land ..." p. 52 n. 65 on the controversy which surrounds the precise relationship of Ulrich's source to Chrétien's romance.
 18. Le Chevalier de la Charrette, l. 3676.
 19. For a challenge to the traditional dating of Chrétien's works see C. Luttrell, The Creation of the First Arthurian Romance: a Quest (London, 1974).
 20. See p. v of Loomis's introduction to K.G.T. Webster's translation, Ulrich von Zatzikhoven, Lanzelet, a Romance of Lancelot, translated from Middle High German, revised and provided with additional notes and an introduction by R.S. Loomis, Columbia University Press, No. 47 of Records of Civilisation, Sources and Studies (New York, 1951).
 21. See E.H. Soudek, 'Lancelot and Lanzelet. Zur Verbreitung der Lancelotsage auf deutschem Sprachgebiet', Rice University Studies, 57 (1971), 115-21.

22. On the subject of the development of the prose romance see:
 R. Brummer, Die erzählende Prosadichtung in den romanischen Literaturen des XIII. Jahrhunderts (Berlin, 1948); H. Tiemann, 'Zur Geschichte des altfranzösischen Prosaromans', RF, 63 (1951), 306-28; E. Köhler, 'Zur Entstehung des altfranzösischen Prosaromans', Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, 5 (1955/56), 287-92; K. Ferkinghoff, 'Vers und Prosa. Die Bedeutung der beginnenden Laienschriftlichkeit für die Entstehung der altfranzösischen Prosaliteratur' (unpublished dissertation, University of Heidelberg, 1959); P.M. Schon, 'Studien zum Stil der frühen französischen Prosa (Robert de Clari, Geoffrey de Villehardouin, Henri de Valenciennes)', Analecta Romanica, 8 (Frankfurt am Main, 1960); H-G. Jantzen, 'Untersuchungen zur Entstehung des altfranzösischen Prosaromans' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Heidelberg, 1966); W.D. Stempel, 'Die Anfänge der romanischen Prosa im XIII. Jahrhundert', in GRLMA, Vol. I (Heidelberg, 1972, pp. 585-601; R. Hartman, La Quete et la Croisade. Villehardouin, Clari et le Lancelot en prose (New York, 1977).
23. Köhler, 'Zur Entstehung', pp. 290-91.
24. See C. Lofmark, The Authority of the Source in Middle High German Narrative Poetry, Bithell Series of Dissertations, 5 (London, 1981), pp. 21-25.
25. Brummer, Die erzählende Prosadichtung, p. 20 and Köhler, 'Zur Entstehung', pp. 287-88.
26. See Haug, "Das Land ...", pp. 77-82.
27. P. Meyer, 'Mélanges de poésie française', R, 6 (1877), 481-503 (p. 498) drew attention to this preface in a British Library MS. (Add. 21212). He considers it to have been written shortly after 1226.
28. Under 'Le roman en prose en France au XIII^e siècle', pp. 503-625, in GRLMA, vol. IV/1 (Heidelberg, 1978), see J. Frappier, 'I. La naissance et L'évolution du roman arthurien en prose', pp. 503-12 and F. Bogdanow, 'II. La trilogie de Robert de Boron: le Perceval en prose', pp. 513-35.

29. Frappier, 'La naissance et L'évolution du roman arthurien en prose', p. 509.
30. The only edition of the entire cycle is: H.O. Sommer, The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances, 7 vols. (Washington, 1908-13). The titles of the constituent romances quoted here are those which Sommer uses. In secondary literature the section entitled Lancelot del Lac is generally referred to as the Lancelot proper. The volumes of Sommer's edition which contain the Prose Lancelot are: Lancelot del Lac III, 1910; IV, 1911; V, 1912. Queste del Saint Graal VI, 1913, pp. 3-199. Mort Artu VI, pp. 203-391. On the relationship of the incomplete Livre d'Artus (a further elaboration of the Cycle) to the Vulgate Cycle see Frappier, GRLMA, vol. IV/1, pp. 598-600.
31. Synopses of the OF Cycle are to be found in: F. Lot, Etude sur le Lancelot en prose, second edition (Paris, 1954), pp. 293-355 and J.D. Bruce, The Evolution of Arthurian Romance, 2 vols (Gloucester, Mass. 1958), II, 308-379. A summarised retelling of the MHG version, together with selected passages translated into modern German and accompanied by a commentary are to be found in: K. Langosch, 'Lanzelot und Ginevra', in König Artus und seine Tafelrunde, neuhochdeutsch in Zusammenarbeit mit W.-D. Lange, revised edition, (Stuttgart 1982), pp. 354-564 and 612-701.
32. For a brief account of the context in which the events of Lancelot's career are set, see Ch. 1, p. 40f.
33. On the use of sources in the Prose Lancelot see: P. Märtens, 'Zur Lanzelotsage. Eine litterarhistorische Untersuchung', RS, 5 (1880), 557-700; J.D. Bruce, 'The Composition of the Old French Prose Lancelot', RR, 9 (1918), 241-68, 353-95; 10 (1919), 48-66, 97-122; Lot, Etude Lancelot, pp. 166-261; J. Frappier, Etude sur La Mort le Roi Artu, second edition (Paris, 1961), pp. 141-215; Elspeth Kennedy, Lancelot do Lac. The Non-Cyclic Old French Prose Romance, 2 vols (Oxford, 1980), II. Introduction, Bibliography, Notes and Variants, Glossary,

- and Index of Proper Names. For the use of biblical sources in the Queste del Saint Graal see A. Pauphilet, Etudes sur la Queste del Saint Graal, attribuée à Gautier Map (Paris, 1921; reprinted Paris, 1968), pp. 27-84, 179-86 and Pauline Matarasso, The Redemption of Chivalry. A Study of the Queste del Saint Graal (Geneva, 1979).
34. For a discussion of how Chrétien's Le Chevalier de la Charrette was incorporated and adapted into the Prose Lancelot, see Lot, Etude Lancelot, pp. 383-417, Frappier, Etude Mort Artu, pp. 87-94 and Gweneth Hutchings, Le Roman en prose de Lancelot du Lac. Le Conte de la Charrette (Paris, 1938), pp. ix-lix.
 35. E.H. Soudek, 'The Cart-Episode: Evolution of an Arthurian Incident from Chrétien's Le Chevalier de la Charrette, through the Old French Prose Lancelot, the Middle High German Prose Lancelot to Malory's Morte Darthur' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1969), (DAI, A31 (1970/71), pp. 1240-41).
 36. For a development of this point see Ch. 2, p. 94ff. On the appearances of Lohos, Arthur's son, in Arthurian literature see G. Huet, 'Deux personnages arturiens', R, 43 (1914), 96-102 (pp. 100-02).
 37. Lot, Etude Lancelot, pp. 167-69.
 38. H. Fromm, 'Zur Karrenritter-Episode im Prosa-Lancelot. Struktur und Geschichte', in Festschrift für Kurt Ruh zum 65. Geburtstag, edited by D. Huschenbett, K. Matzel, G. Steer and N. Wagner, (Tübingen, 1979), pp. 69-97 (p. 96).
 39. H.-H. Steinhoff, 'Artusritter und Gralsheld: Zur Bewertung des höfischen Rittertums im Prosa-Lancelot, in The Epic in Medieval Society. Aesthetic and Moral Values, edited by H. Scholler (Tübingen, 1977), pp. 271-89 (p. 273).
 40. W. Liepe, Elisabeth von Nassau-Saarbrücken: Entstehung und Anfänge des Prosaromans in Deutschland (Halle-Saale, 1920), p. 36.

41. J. Heinzle, 'Zur Stellung des Prosa-Lancelot in der deutschen Literatur des 13. Jahrhunderts', in Artusrittertum im späten Mittelalter. Ethos und Ideologie, edited by F. Wolfzettel (Giessen, 1984), pp. 104-13 (p. 110).
42. Ulrich Flieterers Prosaroman von Lancelot: Nach der Donaueschinger Handschrift, edited by A. Peter (Tübingen, 1885). On the relationship between Flieterer's manuscript and Kluge's base manuscript see Kluge I, pp. XLII-XLV.
43. Lot, Etude Lancelot, pp. 126-40.
44. F. Lot, 'Sur la date du Lancelot en prose', R, 57 (1931), 137-46.
45. A. Pauphilet, Etudes sur la Queste del Saint Graal, pp. 11-12.
46. J. Frappier, Etude Mort Artu, p. 138.
47. U. Ruberg, 'Lancelot ('Lancelot-Gral-Prosaroman')', in Vfl, Vol. 5 (Berlin/New York, 1984), pp. 530-46 (p. 532 f.).
48. On the MSS tradition of the Prose Lancelot see: A. Micha, 'Les manuscrits du Lancelot en prose', R, 81 (1960), 145-87; 84 (1963), 28-60 and 478-99; A. Micha, 'La tradition manuscrite du Lancelot en prose', R, 85 (1964), 292-317 and 478-517; 86 (1965), 330-59; 87 (1966), 194-233. See also Elspeth Kennedy, Lancelot do Lac, II, 1-59.
49. In the preface to her edition of the non-cyclic Prose Lancelot Kennedy comments: 'Valuable as it has been to scholars in the past, Sommer's edition has serious drawbacks; what it provides is almost a diplomatic transcription, without modernised conventions of typography and punctuation and with practically no emendations, very few variants, no explanatory notes, and no glossary ...' (I,v). In similar vein see Micha, 'La tradition manuscrite', R, 87 (1966), p. 195.
50. Der altfranzösische Prosaroman von Lancelot del Lac. Versuch einer kritischen Ausgabe nach allen bekannten Handschriften: Branche I (La Reine as granz dolors), edited by G. Bräuner; Branche II, 1 (Les Enfances Lancelot), edited by H. Becker;

- Branche II, 2 (Les Enfances Lancelot, 2. Teil) and III, 1 (La Dolorouse Garde), edited by H. Bubinger; Branche IV (Galehaut), edited by A. Zimmermann, Marburger Beiträge zur romanischen Philologie, 2 (1911); 6 (1912); 8 (1912); 19 (1917).
51. La Queste del Saint Graal, roman du XIIIe siècle, edited by A. Pauphilet, Les classiques français du moyen age, (Paris, 1923); La Mort le Roi Artu, roman du XIIIe siècle, edited by J. Frappier, second edition (Geneva/Paris, 1956).
 52. Lancelot, Roman en prose du XIIIe siècle, edited by A. Micha, 9 vols. (Paris, 1978-83). Micha did not edit the text in chronological order, but tackled first those parts of the Lancelot proper which had not received attention since Sommer's edition. Thus, vols. VII, VIII and I correspond to Kluge I, 1-597; vols. IV, V and VI correspond to Kluge II, 132-829; vol. II corresponds to Kluge I, 598-642 and II, 3-132. Vol. IX contains an index of proper names and anonymous figures, an index of themes, motifs and situations, a glossary, supplementary notes and a list of errata and emendations.
 53. The non-cyclic Prose Lancelot finishes with the death of Lancelot's great friend Galehot. Kennedy has written a literary study 'which analyses the themes, structure, and narrative technique of the non-cyclic Prose Lancelot and its relationship with other Arthurian texts, and goes on to examine its transformation from an independent romance into part of a great Lancelot-Grail cycle' (I,vi). This study will form a third volume of her edition of the non-cyclic Prose Lancelot and is currently in press.
 54. For an assessment and descriptive comparison of these manuscripts see Kluge I, XIV-LVII; XXXVIII-XLIV; III, IX f.
 55. See Kluge I, LIII-LXII; III, VIII.
 56. See Kluge I, XVI-XVII. When discussing the MSS of Kluge's edition scholars refer to PI, PII and PIII, but in literary studies of the MHG Prose Lancelot the volumes of Kluge's

edition are frequently referred to as II, III and LIII.

57. See Lot, Etude Lancelot, pp. 9-16. Also Bruce, Evolution I pp. 397-401. Micha explains his division of the Lancelot proper in Vol. I, p. XVIIIff. of his edition. Kennedy does not divide her edition of the OF non-cyclic version into chapters, but has instead a running account of the contents at the top of each page.
58. See Lot, Etude Lancelot, pp. 12-13.
59. See Kluge, I, LXVI and III, XIII.
60. For a description of A and M see Kluge I, XXII-XXVI.
61. For greater detail than what follows see Kluge I, VII-XXVI and H.-H. Steinhoff, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des deutschen Prosa-Lancelot' in Probleme mittelalterlicher Überlieferung und Textkritik. Oxforder Colloquium 1966, edited by P. f. Ganz and W. Schröder (Berlin, 1968), pp. 81-95.
62. B.J. Docen, 'Bruchstück eines Romans, vielleicht von Gawan, in niederdeutscher Mundart, Wöchentliche Nachrichten für Freunde der Geschichte, Kunst und Gelahrtheit des Mittelalters, 2 (1816), 109-12.
63. F. Keinz, 'Altdeutsche Denkmäler', MSB, 2 (Munich, 1869), Heft 1, pp. 312-16. C. Hofmann corrected Keinz's edition one year later and established that its origins lay in the OF Prose Lancelot, 'Über ein niederdeutsches Lancelot-fragment und einige daran sich knüpfende literargeschichtliche Fragen', MSB, 2 (Munich, 1870), Heft 1, pp. 39-52.
64. O. Behaghel, 'Das niederdeutsche Lancelotfragment', G, 23 (1878), 441-44 (p. 444).
65. A. Peter, 'Die deutschen Prosaromane von Lancelot', G, 28 (1883), 129-85.
66. E. Schröder, 'Fragment eines mhd. Prosaromans aus dem Anfang des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts', ZfdA, 59 (1922), 161-62.
67. E. Schröder, 'Der deutsche Lancelot in Prosa, ein Werk aus dem Anfang des 13. Jahrhunderts', ZfdA, 60 (1923), 148-51.

68. E. Schröder, 'Eine unbenutzte Quelle des mittelhochdeutschen Sprachschatzes', Neuph.Mitt., 33 (1932), 22-26.
69. P. Tilvis, 'Mittelniederländisches im Prosa-Lancelot I', Neuph.Mitt., 52 (1951), 195-205. See also his later article, 'Prosa-Lancelot Studien I-II', Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, Ser. B, Vol. 110, (Helsinki/Wiesbaden, 1957).
70. Steinhoff, 'Zur Entstehung', p. 87, points out that Tilvis did not take into account Rolf Schäftlein's unpublished dissertation, 'Studien zu den Amorbacher Bruckstücken' (Humboldt University, Berlin, 1952), in which Schäftlein concludes: 'Es besteht kein Zweifel, dass P aus A hervorgegangen ist' (p. 87).
71. Kluge, II, VII-IX and see also Steinhoff, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte', p. 83, n. 9.
72. H.-H. Steinhoff, 'Zum Münchener Lancelot-Fragment (Cgm. 5250, Nr. 25)', Wolfram-Studien, 2 (1974), 254-58 (p. 258).
73. k is a fifteenth century manuscript in the Ripuarian dialect which belongs to a different redaction to P; R is a fourteenth century fragment in Middle Dutch which Kluge thought might be a translation of the same source MS as P. H.-H. Steinhoff is currently preparing an edition of that section of the Lancelot proper which corresponds to the lacuna in P from the Bavarian MS a (Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, No. 8017-8020). MS a was completed in 1576 and is the only complete translation of the Prose Lancelot into German. However, Kluge rejected it on the grounds that it seemed to represent quite a different redaction from P and was quite independent of all the other German MSS, unlike k. On the filling of the lacuna see Kluge II, IXff.
74. Steinhoff, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte', pp. 94-95. Kluge's edition of PIII had not been published by the time Steinhoff wrote this article and so his conjectures are restricted to PI and PII.

75. P. Tilvis, 'Ist der mittelhochdeutsche Prosa-Lancelot II direkt aus dem altfranzösischen übersetzt?', Neuph.Mitt., 73 (1972), 629-41. See also C. Minis, 'Zur Ausgabe der deutschen Übersetzung der mittelniederländischen 'Karren-Suite' im 'Prosa-Lancelot' ', Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Älteren Germanistik, 1 (1972), 193-201.
76. Kluge, III, XIII.
77. Discussions at a conference on the MHG Prose Lancelot held by the Wolfram von Eschenbach-Gesellschaft in Schweinfurt in September 1984 revealed a range of opinion on this issue. The papers delivered at this conference will be published as vol. 9 in the series Wolfram-Studien.
78. Kennedy, Lancelot do lac, II, 11. For similar comments by A. Micha see 'Tradition manuscrite et versions du Lancelot en Prose', BBIAS, 14 (1962), 99-106.
79. Elspeth Kennedy, 'The scribe as editor', in Mélanges de Langue et de Littérature du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance offerts à Jean Frappier (Geneva, 1970), pp. 523-31 (p. 531).
80. See Lofmark, The Authority of the Source, pp. 35-47.
81. See Ch. 1, p. 39.
82. U. Ruberg, Raum und Zeit im Prosa-Lancelot, Medium Aevum: Philologische Studien, 9 (Munich, 1965), p. 135.
83. See Ch. 1, p. 43ff.
84. Kennedy, Lancelot do Lac, II, 10.
85. See Ch. 1, p. 53ff.
86. See Lofmark, The Authority of the Source, pp. 48-66.
87. Ruberg, Raum und Zeit, p. 135.
88. By comparison, the translator of k (see n. 73) makes explicit reference to his role of translator (II, 115):

Diss buchelin zu einer stonden
Hain ich inn flemische geschriben fonden,
Von eyne kostigen meister verricht,
Der es uss franczose darzu hait gedicht
Dwile das alle dutschen nit konden verstan,

Habe ich unnutzeliche zcijt darczu versliessen
 und gethan
 Biss das ich es herczu bracht hain.
 Deo gracias

89. Claire Santoni-Rozier, 'Du Roman en prose Lancelot du Lac au Prosa-Lancelot, Traduction et Adaptation dans l'Episode de la Charrette: der Karrenritter' in La Traduction un art, une technique, Actes du 11^o Congrès de l'Association des Germanistes de l'Enseignement supérieur (A.G.E.S.) Nancy 28-30 April, (Nancy, 1979), pp. 226-59.
90. Soudek, 'The Cart-Episode: Evolution of an Arthurian Incident', pp. 2-3.

C H A P T E R O N E

STRUCTURAL PATTERNS IN THE PROSE LANCELOT

One of the characteristic features of intellectual life in the thirteenth century was the gathering together and systematic ordering of knowledge in compendia known as summae. Summae were compiled for the various branches of learning, although they became particularly associated with the realm of theology, of which Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologiae (1267-73) is the most familiar and influential example. The Arthurian prose romances of the thirteenth century have been frequently regarded as a literary manifestation of this intellectual trend in the way that they draw together elements from various romances, recasting and ordering them within the framework of one text. The prose Lancelot is an apposite example of this analogy, as Jean Frappier comments:

Si le XII^e siècle a davantage le sens du concret, le XIII^e est plus capable de créer de grandes constructions intellectuelles et romanesques, des architectures d'idées, si l'on pense à la Somme théologique, des architectures de fiction, si l'on pense au Lancelot en prose. (1)

In the extant verse romances of the twelfth century the careers of the Grail knight Perceval and Lancelot were in no way connected and neither of these two hero knights appeared in the chronicles of Geoffrey of Monmouth and Master Wace of Jersey.² However, in the thirteenth century Prose Lancelot these originally independent and in character very different strands of Arthurian narrative, the life of Lancelot, the quest for the Grail and the history of Arthur's reign, coalesce and determine jointly the framework of the romance.

The resultant work is a romance of vast proportions.³

The three constituent parts of the Prose Lancelot: the Lancelot proper, the Gral-Queste and the Tod des K nig Artus, are all markedly different in content, tone and spirit.⁴ A brief outline of the contents of each romance will indicate the diversity contained within the Trilogy:

Lancelot proper - The Lancelot proper is the largest (it is three times the combined length of the Gral-Queste and the Tod des K nig Artus) and most diversified of the three parts of the Prose Lancelot. The narrative space of the Lancelot proper is such that there is room to explore in considerable detail the ties of friendship and of love, the implications of the secular code of chivalry, the fellowship of the Round Table, the feudal relationship between vassal and overlord and the nature of territorial aggression. The focus of the narrative is largely concentrated on the career of Lancelot - his disinheritance by Claudas, his overwhelming love for Ginover, his friendship with Galahot, his services to Artus, his conduct as a knight, his membership of the Round Table, his relations with his kin and his fathering of Galaat, the Grail winner. The events of Lancelot's life are related as a series of adventures, which are interwoven with those of his kin and the knights of the Round Table within a narrative pattern of quests, tournaments and battles.

Gral-Queste - The broad canvas of the Lancelot proper is supplanted in the Gral-Queste by the concentration of the narrative on one quest only - that for the Grail. The values

of secular chivalry are displaced by those of an ascetic and mystic religious chivalry. The romance is concerned solely with the adventures of the Round Table knights as they attempt to achieve the quest for the Grail. The degree of their success is seen to be in proportion to the extent of their spiritual virtue and awareness. Lancelot's success is only partial, as a result of his adultery with Ginover, but his son, Galaat, eventually completes the quest with Perceval and Bohort, Lancelot's cousin, in attendance.

Tod des König Artus - In the Lancelot proper we learn that the Round Table was founded for the express purpose of achieving the quest for the Grail. With the completion of this quest its function is at an end and there are no further adventures or quests in the Kingdom of Logres. The absence of these results in the more constant presence of the Round Table knights at Arthur's court. Consequently, tensions that exist within the community of the Round Table, most notably the adulterous love of Lancelot and the Queen, become more apparent and eventually trigger off a series of events which wreck the harmonious but fragile fellowship of knights. A blood feud between Lancelot and Gawan, territorial aggression by the Romans and treason on the part of Artus' bastard son, Morderet, culminate in the downfall of Artus and the destruction of the Round Table fellowship.

Although the three parts of the Prose Lancelot are so very different in content, tone and spirit, they are none the less interdependent and undoubtedly best understood when read together. The intertwining of the life of Lancelot, the history of the Grail

and the history of Arthur's reign, provide the broad parameters within which the diverse episodes of the narrative are realised, but the interlinking of the three romances is not merely achieved by a common framework and common dramatis personae. In the course of the Lancelot proper certain events in the Gral-Queste and the Tod des König Artus are anticipated or prophesied. Thus, on the very first page of the Lancelot proper we learn that Lancelot's baptismal name is Galaat, the name of his son who will achieve the quest for the Grail, and in a number of adventures which are closely connected with the Grail quest it is predicted that a better knight than Lancelot will arrive, a knight who will have a messianic role. The fact that Lancelot is the father of Galaat ensures that the secular world of the Lancelot proper and the spiritual world of the Gral-Queste are inextricably linked. The seeds of the conflict which develops in the Tod des König Artus are sown in the Lancelot proper. Thus for example, when Lancelot is imprisoned by Morgan, Artus' half-sister and a sorceress, he paints on the walls of his room the story of his love relationship with Ginover. The secret of these paintings is revealed to Artus in the Tod des König Artus. In the chapters which follow this one I shall consider in some detail, with particular reference to the portrayal of the main protagonists, further examples of how incidents and issues in the Gral-Queste and the Tod des König Artus are foreshadowed in the Lancelot proper.

Careful reading has revealed how numerous are the narrative devices employed to unify the Vulgate Cycle and how

thoroughly they integrate the three romances of the Prose

Lancelot in particular:

L'unité de structure est incontestable: un plan commun, des préparations robustes et subtiles à la fois, de multiples rappels, tout un jeu d'échos dans la forêt des aventures et des allégories unissent entre eux ces trois romans. (5)

The high degree of unity which has become apparent within all the diversity led Rudolph Voss to contest whether it is appropriate to describe the Prose Lancelot as a work in cyclical form:

Für die drei Kernteile des Lancelot - Gral - Korpus trifft die Bezeichnung 'Zyklus' in keiner Weise zu, da das Handlungsgefüge sie umgreift und eng miteinander verknüpft, so dass sie also keineswegs nur thematisch aufeinander bezogene Einzelgebilde darstellen, wie es für einen Zyklus charakteristisch wäre. (6)

I agree with Voss's reservations and consider the term 'trilogy' to be a more appropriate description of the Prose Lancelot.

Before reviewing more closely the results of research into the structural organization of the Prose Lancelot, I shall first consider the vexed question of the authorship of the Trilogy, for it is this issue which in the first place generated the fruitful investigation into narrative patterns in the Prose Lancelot.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE PROSE LANCELOT

The Prose Lancelot is sometimes referred to as the (pseudo-) Map Cycle, for the text itself claims to be the work of Walter Map, Archdeacon of Oxford (d. 1209) and author of De nugis curialium. According to the text (III, 384, 2ff.), Walter Map

had been commissioned by Henry II of England (d. 1189) to undertake the work. At the end of the Lancelot proper (II, 829, 9f.) and the Tod des K nig Artus (III, 787, 1f.) Walter Map is named as the author of the history of the adventures of the Round Table knights and the account of the end of Artus' reign, while at the end of the Gral-Queste he is referred to as the translator of a Latin chronicle into the vernacular (III, 384, 2ff.).⁷ It has, however, long been established that the identification of the author as Walter Map is most probably a fabrication.⁸ Perhaps his name was simply borrowed to give the work prestige. Whatever the truth of this might be, the attribution of all three parts to Walter Map is no doubt intended to influence our conception of the unity of the Prose Lancelot.

The question of who the author, or authors, of the Prose Lancelot might have been has exercised scholars greatly, and has given rise to much speculation. The advent of Ferdinand Lot's important study of the Prose Lancelot marked a turning point in the way scholars approached the question of the authorship of the Trilogy.⁹ Until Lot's study scholars, in keeping with the general trend of medieval scholarship at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, had been greatly preoccupied with the search for sources and with postulating earlier stages of the Vulgate Cycle in an attempt to establish how and from what it had developed.¹⁰ The general opinion had been that the Cycle was composed of a number of disparate parts which had been welded together by interpolators, redactors, and, to a far lesser extent, scribes.¹¹ Even the central romance of the

Vulgate Cycle, the Lancelot proper, was presumed not to be the work of one man.¹² Little credit was given to the medieval author, or authors, of the Prose Lancelot for artistic ability.

After a thorough examination of the structure and content of the Prose Lancelot within the context of the Vulgate Cycle, Ferdinand Lot reached the revolutionary conclusion that there must have been a single author responsible for the whole work (with the exception of the Estoire de Merlin, the first part of which is unequivocally a redaction of Robert de Boron's Merlin). His argument rested on the following points:

1) The three parts of the Prose Lancelot are bound together by the narrative device of interlacing, i.e. the complex interweaving of various strands of action and the cross-references which are to be found not only within one romance, but also from one romance to another.¹³

2) The events of the Prose Lancelot are contained within a systematic chronological scheme.¹⁴

3) Lot noted the antinomy between the courtly chivalric ethic of the Lancelot proper and the ascetic chivalric code of the Queste, but he found evidence to show that throughout the text these two sets of values were juxtaposed in such a way as to create a thematic unity in the Trilogy. He felt that there was a unity of plan, spirit, language and style throughout the three romances.¹⁵

The evidence which Lot had found of the detailed intricacy of the structure of the Prose Lancelot convinced him of

the sole authorship of the work. He likened the Vulgate Cycle to 'une énorme cathédrale bâtie depuis les fondations jusqu'au faite par un seul et même architecte'.¹⁶ Many objections were raised to the use Lot made of his evidence and to his final conclusion.¹⁷ However, his sympathetic reading of the Cycle was instrumental in encouraging other scholars to appreciate the artistic merit of the Prose Lancelot rather than regarding it as a collective work which gradually emerged in the course of the evolution of the Arthurian romance.

Lot's study prompted other scholars, most notably Albert Pauphilet and Jean Frappier, to speculate about the authorship of the Prose Lancelot. Pauphilet saw a fundamental split in the unity of the Cycle. He grouped together the Queste del Saint Graal and the Estoire del Saint Graal on the one hand and the Mort Artu and the Lancelot proper on the other. He believed that that part of the Lancelot proper commonly known as the Agravain section had been written after the rest of the Lancelot proper and the Queste in order to forge a link between them.¹⁸ Pauphilet concentrated his attention on the many discrepancies between the constituent parts of the Cycle and saw no reason to believe that there had originally been a master plan in its conception, although he appreciated the merits of the Cycle as it has come down to us.¹⁹

Jean Frappier's solution was a compromise between those of Pauphilet and Lot. He developed Lot's comparison of the Prose Lancelot to a medieval cathedral:

Si le Lancelot-Graal est l'oeuvre de plusieurs auteurs, je crois qu'une image pareille au labyrinthe de la cathédrale de Reims symboliserait au mieux la nature de leur collaboration; il faudrait figurer au centre, et plus grand que les autres, celui qui a conçu le plan d'ensemble dans son unité, celui qui mérite, d'être appelé le premier maître de l'oeuvre ou, d'un seul mot, l'Architecte. (20)

According to Frappier the 'architect' probably wrote the Lancelot proper (or at least the greater part of it), while two collaborators wrote the Queste and the Mort Artu respectively. These two collaborators, he concluded, worked within the parameters set by the 'architect' in his blueprint of the whole work.²¹ Rather than a juxtaposition of two chivalric ideals in the course of the Lancelot proper and the Queste, Frappier sees an evolution from a courtly ideal to an ascetic and mystic one.²² His fundamental understanding of the Cycle is that it is 'une unité de structure, non d'esprit ni d'art'.²³

Lot's theory of sole authorship was taken up again later by Alexandre Micha, although from a different point of view. Micha disagreed with Lot's argument that there was a 'double esprit' which ran through the whole work. Instead he insisted, and I think rightly, on the author's right to portray a rich, complex and at times contradictory world.²⁴ The question of the authorship of the Prose Lancelot remains an enigma. Of the hypotheses advanced Frappier's has been most widely accepted.²⁵ Scholars working on the German version of the Prose Lancelot have also found that a structural analysis of the Trilogy, or a close reading of a particular episode or theme within the context of the whole work has prompted them to agree with Frappier's

conclusions about the structural unity of the Prose Lancelot:

Je stärker man sich einlebt, desto mehr verpflichtet man sich dem Gedanken der 'Bauhütte' in der viele Hände verschiedener Begabung sich dem einen planenden Kopf unterordnen. (26)

and the problematic nature of the unity of spirit and tone in the Trilogy:

Während aber ein einheitlicher Handlungsplan der drei Teile Lancelot-Gralsuche-König Artus' Tod trotz mancher Widersprüche und Inkonsistenzen im einzelnen und trotz verschiedener Stil-Lage als gesichert gelten kann, ist die ihm entsprechende innere Einheitlichkeit noch immer umstritten. (27)

Except in those instances when I wish to make a particular point about the authorship of the Prose Lancelot, I shall henceforth throughout my dissertation simply refer to the author or authors of the Trilogy as the prose romancer.

Within the broad parameters of the histories of Lancelot, Arthur's reign and the Grail the narrative of the Prose Lancelot explores such diverse themes as the tie of kinship, love relationships, friendship, the fellowship of the Round Table, the function of secular and religious chivalry, ascetic mysticism, dualism, gradualism, feudal relationships, territorial aggression, the responsibilities of a ruler and the interaction of Providence, fate, chance and free will. Some themes are more central to the Trilogy than others, but no one theme predominates throughout the work. Rather than a unity of theme there is what Eugène Vinaver calls a 'cohesion of themes'.²⁸ Themes are juxtaposed and intertwined in an everchanging kaleidoscopic pattern, but

simultaneously they are also fitted into a linear design which is determined by the histories of Lancelot, Arthur's reign and the Grail. This narrative richness prompted Rudolf Voss to examine from a structural point of view the divergent Weltanschauungen contained within the unity of the narrative. He abstracted the Lancelot romance (and consequently also the Arthurian romance) and the Grail romance from the whole and examined them independently, tracing the structural pattern of a history of salvation and the interrelationship of discrete themes. This study led Voss to accept Frappier's 'architect' theory and to conclude further that the lack of thematic unity was an artistic expression of an age in which there was no longer a comprehensive and harmonious Weltanschauung, but rather a pluralism of values.²⁹

In the last two decades there has been a great deal of interest shown by scholars in how the structural unity of the Prose Lancelot has been achieved. What follows is a survey of the main lines of investigation into how the Prose Lancelot functions as a work of art. My survey is not exhaustive, but it contains what I consider to be the most significant contributions to our understanding of the narrative principles employed to create the unity of the Prose Lancelot.

THE STRUCTURAL ORGANIZATION OF THE PROSE LANCELOT

Lot recognised the two fundamental narrative devices in the Prose Lancelot as being the principe d'entrelacement and the procédé du chronologique. Together these determine the form and

explicate the meaning of the Cycle. The attention to chronological detail ensures the temporal linear progression of the narrative, and in doing so underpins the greater sense of history as conveyed by the framework of Lancelot's biography, the chronicle of Arthur's reign and the redemptory quality of the Grail legend. The acentric principle of interlacing allows an apparently simultaneous exposition of events; the adventures of various knights, the interaction of a number of contexts and levels of narrative reality are interwoven in such a way as to produce an intricate polyphony of action and meaning.³⁰ Lot's study of these two narrative features laid the foundations upon which subsequent research into the structural unity of the Prose Lancelot has built.

The structuring of time

Lot noted details of chronology throughout the Prose Lancelot, establishing the accuracy and frequency with which the romances of the Trilogy register the passage of time. He examined the Lancelot proper most thoroughly and made the astonishing discovery that in all its labyrinthine narrative 'il n'y a jamais d'erreur grave. Le fil chronologique ne casse jamais'. However, a more summary examination of the other two romances revealed that 'La chronologie de la Queste et celle de la 'Mort d'Arthur' sont beaucoup plus lâches.'³¹ Lot used his demonstration of the continuity of the chronological plan of the Trilogy solely as support for his claim that one man was responsible for the composition of the work. Albert Pauphilet found that the reason for the less rigorous chronological

precision of the Queste was because 'il (the author) associe et combine ses épisodes non selon leur forme narrative, mais selon leur signification morale. Ce ne sont pas des fragments de "chroniques" qu'il enchevêtre, mais des idées qu'il groupe.'³²

Jean Frappier established that the precision of the chronology in the Mort Artu varied from one part of the narrative to another and that this variation was due to a greater emphasis on the psychology of the figures and on the dramatic presentation of events than on chronological exactitude.³³

Rather than examining chronology as a structural element in the composition of the Prose Lancelot, Paul Imbs considered how the figures in the Queste and the Mort Artu experience time.³⁴ This approach was developed further by Uwe Ruberg in a study of the MHG version of the Lancelot proper which had as its starting point two questions:

1) Welche Funktion tragen Raum und Zeit im Gestalt- und Sinngefüge des Werkes?

2) Welchen Anteil gewinnen Raum und Zeit am Bewusstsein der dargestellten Menschen?³⁵

After a detailed examination of the text he came to the conclusion that underlying the events of the narrative there was a tightly organized continuum of time and place, which, as well as providing the narrative with a coherent framework, also reinforced those themes explored in the romance. Ruberg demonstrates how time and place are used effectively, to knit independent events into a richer context of poetic meaning.³⁶ In a chapter of her thesis



on the narrative technique employed in the Queste, Grace Savage similarly examined the interpretative implications of the treatment of time.³⁷

In addition to the prominence given to the recording of the passage of time in the Prose Lancelot, the whole work is bound together by a complex system of recalling and foreshadowing, of dream vision and predestination, of prophecy and fulfilment.³⁸ The effect of this structural feature is to create at certain points in the narrative a sense of the simultaneity of the past, present and future.³⁹ After discussing the unifying effect of prophecy and predestination in the Trilogy Frappier concludes:

On peut dire que l'unité structurale du corpus entier est fondée sur la prédestination d'un lignage élu, celui de Lancelot et de Galaad. (40)

Nancy Vine has made a study of how genealogy is used as an effective poetic resource in the Prose Lancelot to link the early history of the Grail with the Arthurian world.⁴¹ In her thesis Vine examines how kinship is systematized in a given corpus of OF texts (c. 1050-1225). She traces the various ways in which lineage is employed as a metaphor in hagiography, the chansons de geste, the chronicles and finally as a poetic metaphor in the Prose Lancelot.⁴²

The construction of genealogy is not the only narrative feature which the Arthurian prose romances have in common with the chronicles. The interdependence of these genres of writing is evidenced by their common use of the narrative technique of interlacing,⁴³ that other narrative principle which Lot recognised as being fundamental to the structure of the Prose Lancelot.

Interlacing

Lot described the pattern of interlacing in the Prose

Lancelot as follows:

Aucune aventure ne forme un tout se suffisant à lui-même. D'une part des épisodes antérieurs, laissés provisoirement de côté, y prolongent des ramifications, d'autre part des épisodes subséquents, proches ou lointains, y sont amorcés. C'est un enchevêtrement systématique. (44)

Interlacing in the Arthurian prose romances is a narrative device which intertwines and interweaves the actions of a number of figures. The reader follows one line of action only to find it interrupted by another and that perhaps by yet another. The interruptions may continue, but the reader will eventually find himself at some point returned to the original line of action, which will probably be interrupted again (and again). Such intertwining and interweaving is ubiquitous in the history of narrative literature. C.S. Lewis was able to trace the use of it as far back as Ovid's Metamorphoses, but he recognised that it had dominated European fiction both in prose and verse from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries.⁴⁵ At its most simple interlacing conveys a sense of simultaneous action. The interlacing of medieval narrative is, however, a far more finely wrought tool. In the Arthurian romances, and in particular in the prose romances, this technique was developed as an effective means of both structuring the narrative and conveying its meaning. In the Prose Lancelot the device of interlacing is used not simply to juxtapose figures and their actions, but rather to draw parallels between them, to compare and contrast them, and in so doing, to develop and define them. There were specific reasons why

interlacing should have emerged as the most appropriate narrative technique for the Arthurian prose romance.

Within the history of the Arthurian romance the use of interlacing can be traced back to the origins of the genre, namely the works of Chrétien de Troyes. In his seminal study of Chrétien's Perceval Wilhelm Kellermann demonstrated that one of the salient features of the romance was its bipartite structure:

Im Percevalroman haben wir eine Doppelheit der geistigen Welt vor uns, der eine Doppelheit in der Romantechnik entspricht. (46)

He observed how Chrétien developed the repetition, parallelism and symmetry which were inherent in the conte to elucidate his romance. In particular he examined how the contrasting and the intertwining of the adventures of Gauvain and Perceval illuminated the central issues of the work.⁴⁷ Frappier, too, examined the bipartite structure of Chrétien's Perceval which Kellermann had so successfully analysed. He traced the beginnings of interlacing in Chrétien's Yvain and its more extensive use in both Lancelot and Perceval to link two parallel series of adventures.⁴⁸

In the verse romances the bipartite form became one way of expanding the source material and illuminating its import. However, it was not capable of structuring the vast amount of material which the prose romancers wished to include in their works. They needed a more flexible form which would allow them to embrace and control within one work a multiplicity of knights and their adventures, and also the richness of theme that was to be found in the corpus of Arthurian literature by the time they

were writing. In the conclusion to his book, Structure in Medieval Narrative, William Ryding distinguishes three phases in the development of romance literature:⁴⁹

1) from the simple to the compound - as in the verse romances of Chrétien de Troyes.

2) from the compound to the complex - as in the Prose Lancelot.

3) from the complex to the simple - as in the Arthurian tales of Malory.

He comments that the change in form in phases one and two seemed to be determined to a large extent by the 'impulse to amplify' and he links this development with the growing emphasis which late twelfth century treatises on the art of poetry placed on amplificatio.⁵⁰

In the prologue to his Le Chevalier de la Charrette Chrétien de Troyes made a distinction between his 'matiere' and his 'san', which was to become characteristic of the romancer's attitude to his artistic task.⁵¹ He ostensibly understood his function as a poet to be to relate the events of the tale as he found them, to illuminate the meaning he perceived within them and to present this in 'Une mout bele conjointure'.⁵² It became a convention of the verse romances that the two levels of narrative, the action and the meaning, were controlled to a great extent by the persona of the narrator. This narrator was characterised by his analytic approach, his self-consciousness and his use of

irony. He would act as an active intermediary between his material and his audience, seeking to interest them, to involve them, to stimulate and provoke them, to make them focus on a particular problem, and to guide their opinions. The persona of this kind of narrator all but disappears in the prose romances. The impersonality of the adopted chronicle framework excludes overt intervention, the room for comment.

The Prose Lancelot purports to be the work of Walter Map, but authorial activity is limited to the role of a scribe.⁵³ The Trilogy is ostensibly an accurate account of events and needs no reference beyond itself and, in the case of the Queste, the Latin chronicle of which it is supposed to be a translation, to substantiate its truthfulness. Jean Marie Dornbush and Alexandre Leupin have traced the identity of the narrator's voice in the Prose Lancelot and in the entire Vulgate Cycle respectively, and both have found that there is a complex fiction built around the author of the narrative.⁵⁴ The Lancelot proper claims to be the recorded reports given by individual knights at Arthur's court of their adventures, although there is no indication of who was responsible for arranging and interweaving the various adventures into the sequence in which we read them. Nor can this claim embrace the entire content of the romance, and so sections of it remain anonymous.⁵⁵ The Queste is likewise ostensibly the report given by Bohort on his return to Arthur's court of the quest for the Grail, but again there are large tracts of the narrative which cannot be considered part of Bohort's narrative and which therefore remain unaccounted for. In the Mort Artu this fiction of the

first-hand accounts of individual knights is abandoned (with the exception of Girflet's eye witness account of Arthur's death), and the narrator remains impersonal throughout. Within the action of the Prose Lancelot the function of narrator is partially fulfilled by a number of peripheral figures (e.g. the Lady of the Lake, wise men, hermits) who on occasion anticipate events, and explicate their meaning. Although the prose romances differ significantly in many respects from the verse romances, at the same time they do continue, modify and extend further many of the conventions of the verse romance.⁵⁶ Thus, in the absence of a single, overt narrator who could be used in part as a cipher to shape and illuminate the text, the prose romancer developed more fully another technique which the verse romancer had employed to convey meaning, i.e. the presentation and arrangement of the narrative material itself.

Douglas Kelly has examined in detail how Chrétien de Troyes in his version of the Lancelot legend ordered events in such a way that they mirror and frame one another.⁵⁷ Kelly notates these sequences of episodes as ABCBA, and related variations as ABABA, ABACA, and he demonstrates how this technique is employed to develop the thematic content of a segment of narrative. This highly conscious arrangement of episodes becomes one of the salient structural narrative features of the Prose Lancelot. In an article on the Mort Artu, Norris Lacy reminds his readers of the 'architectural' quality of medieval composition, of the interest romancers had in rhythm, symmetry, gradation and proportion, and he observes in particular a continued use of Chrétien's mirroring

effect in the Mort Artu, in the groupings of two sets of episodes.⁵⁸ Carol Chase examined the application of this technique in the Lancelot proper, and established that within the quests adventures were grouped according to a basic pattern which has many variants:

The basic model is a regular ABAB...sequence of short symmetrical passages in which the adventures of A, who is looking for B, alternate with incidents concerning the latter. (59)

Ryding has drawn attention to how this fundamental kind of patterning can be seen to have been extended to embrace the arrangement of the five constituent romances of the Vulgate Cycle.⁶⁰ The Queste and Mort Artu, Grail legend and Arthurian chronicle respectively, were balanced by the later addition of the Estoire del Saint Graal and the Estoire de Merlin so that the following pattern emerged:

A Grail, B Chronicle, C Lancelot, A Grail, B Chronicle.

While the bipartite construction of the verse romance became the polyphony of the interlacing of the prose works, the 'architectural' arrangement of the verse narrative was developed into the sophisticated tool of thematic development by analogy in the Prose Lancelot.

Thematic development by analogy

The narrative device of interlacing in the Prose Lancelot operates on two levels. It determines, develops and structures the pattern of the narrative action, as it pursues and interweaves the adventures and experiences of a large number of figures. Simultaneously it allows thematic development by analogy. This

latter aspect of interlacing has received much attention in the last twenty years, and an understanding of how it functions has become one of the interpretative keys to the Prose Lancelot. Eugène Vinaver was amongst the first to appreciate the aesthetics of the polyphonic and acentric structure of the Prose Lancelot. He observed that analogy is 'one of the constants - actual or potential - of poetic structure',⁶¹ and traced how in the thirteenth century the increased use of the juxtaposition of analogous incidents developed analogy into one of the most characteristic structural features of Arthurian romance.⁶² Through his perceptive and sympathetic analysis of the text he demonstrates how the potential of analogical structure is superbly realised in the Prose Lancelot. Vinaver considered the pervasiveness of the analogical structure throughout the Trilogy within a broad context which embraced the art and thought of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Vinaver's insights have been further substantiated and developed by a number of studies (generally restricted to one of the constituent romances of the Trilogy) of how thematic development by analogy operates.

In her study of feudal chivalry in the Lancelot proper Cynthia Caples analyses how various themes are developed by their recurrence in different contexts. In particular she examines the two themes of contested land ownership and adultery. These two themes are central to the main narrative course of Lancelot's biography. Caples notes how, in what appears to be a welter of incidental episodes, these themes are explored from many different angles and thus 'act as a kind of running commentary' on the

themes as they are depicted in the career of Lancelot.⁶³ She has observed a difference of emphasis in the treatment of these themes between the first and second parts of the Lancelot proper and concludes that this difference is a means of conditioning our assessment of and attitude towards Lancelot prior to the start of the Quest for the Grail.⁶⁴

Interlacing is used throughout the Prose Lancelot, but it is more in evidence in some parts of the Trilogy than in others.⁶⁵ It is in the Queste that thematic development by analogy is most easily observed, for there the narrative has only one focus, the Quest for the Grail. The pattern created by the action is thus more readily perceived than in the more diverse Lancelot proper or in the concentration of perspectives found in the Mort Artu. In the Queste the adventures of various knights of the Round Table who set out on the Quest for the Grail are seen in relation to one another. Through the juxtaposing and contrasting of their adventures it becomes apparent that the degree of their success is both a measure of their own spiritual awareness and that of their companions. In a chapter of her book on allegorical imagery Rosemond Tuve clarifies the narrative structure of Spenser's The Faerie Queene by comparing it with that of the Arthurian romance, in particular the Queste.⁶⁶ She illustrates how the sequence in which events occur in the interwoven structure of the Queste is carefully planned as a means of guiding our comprehension of the significance of the romance and concludes that 'the real principle of unity lies in "meanings" of happenings, which inform what happened and are not separate

from the story'.⁶⁷ She gives a very good analysis of how the adventures of one knight can influence and condition our understanding of another's,⁶⁸ and she discovers in the Queste a further dimension of the narrative technique of interlacing, when used most skilfully:

But events connected by entrelacement are not juxtaposed; they are interlaced, and when we get back to our first character he is not where we left him as we finished his episode, but in the place of psychological state or condition of meaningfulness to which he has been pulled by the events occurring in following episodes written about someone else. (69)

In a study of the structure and meaning of the Mort Artu Atie Zuurdeeg has studied how the narrative devices of juxtaposition, interlacing and thematic development by analogy are used to convey the complexity of factors which contribute to the downfall of Artus and the destruction of the Round Table.⁷⁰

In recent years a number of scholars, particularly American, have been interested in the relevance of the concept of 'spatial form' to medieval literature. The term 'spatial form' was coined by Joseph Frank to refer to the non-temporal features of a text.⁷¹ In an article on 'spatial form' in medieval literature Norris Lacy has defined the term as follows:

... a disjunctive technique of composing in which sequential relations are emphasised, leaving the reader to connect nonconsecutive parts of a work by knitting together its related fragments. These parts function as components of simultaneous patterns whose significance is independent of temporal sequence. (72)

Lacy has examined how this concept is realised in the Mort Artu through the use of interlacing and analogical construction.⁷³

Janice Smith Heiple has explicated this concept further in a more

detailed examination of 'spatial form' in the Mort Artu. She distinguishes two kinds of narrative in the text, linear and spatial, which complement one another as matter and commentary respectively. This spatial narrative 'which includes interlace, juxtaposition, analogy and symmetry' elucidates and interprets the wider significance of the linear, chronological narrative.⁷⁴ She concludes that the 'non-causal, non-consecutive narrative sequence' is an appropriate stylistic means of reflecting all the 'complexity of the society it depicts'.⁷⁵

The structural division of the Prose Lancelot

The narrative technique of interlacing makes a subdivision of the Prose Lancelot romances into coherent sections extremely difficult. This is particularly true of the Lancelot proper, where interlacing is most flexibly and extensively used. In this romance figures may disappear from the narrative and the action in which they were involved may be left incomplete, while other strands of action are pursued. Eventually, the absent figures will be reintroduced and their particular adventures concluded, but this might not happen until about a hundred pages have elapsed. In order to segment the interlaced narrative of the Prose Lancelot in a manner appropriate to its structure, it is necessary to discover structural patterns which underlie the entire Trilogy. One organisational feature of the Prose Lancelot narrative is the way in which events are structured within a rhythm of quests, tournaments and battles. In the Lancelot proper the individual adventures of various knights are grouped together within shared quests. The quests, essentially an individualistic

exercise, are interrupted by and interspersed with the collective gatherings of tournaments and battles. In the Gral-Queste there are no battles and virtually no tournaments, for the activity of the knights is concentrated on the one quest. Once the Grail has been achieved there are no further adventures and no quests in the Kingdom of Logres. Consequently, the individual activity of the knights virtually ceases in the Tod des König Artus. Attention is focused sharply on Arthur's court and the action unfolds in a rhythm of tournaments and battles.

Some attention has been paid to the structural significance of the battles which occur in the Lancelot proper by Carol Chase,⁷⁶ but a more useful study in this respect is Meredith Stoehr's detailed analysis of the episode of the war in Flanders, which occurs in the Lancelot proper.⁷⁷ Stoehr examines the themes and structure of this episode and considers how it is integrated into the context of the entire Trilogy.

Rather more attention has been focused on the quest motif.⁷⁸ Caples recognizes it as the dominant structural feature of the Lancelot proper:

It is my contention that the structure of the German Prose Lancelot can best be analysed by treating the story as a sequence of quests. (79)

Carol Chase has demonstrated how the individual adventures of the knights in the Lancelot proper are organised into ten major quests.⁸⁰ Caples observes that these quests become futile as the romance progresses, and interprets this as a means of preparing the reader for the different set of values which will obtain in the quest for the Grail. Amelia Rutledge also finds that the

quests of that section of the Lancelot proper prior to the Queste are used to prepare the reader for the import of the supreme quest for the Grail. She discerns a pattern of ranking amongst the knights according to their success within the quests of the Lancelot proper which corresponds to the degree of their success in the quest for the Grail.⁸¹ Uwe Ruberg distinguishes four different kinds of quests in the Prose Lancelot and explores their implications for informing our understanding of the narrative. He sees the quests of the Lancelot proper in a typological relationship to that for the Grail.⁸²

In his study of time and place in the Prose Lancelot Uwe Ruberg attempted a structural division of episodes in the Lancelot proper according to a correlation between the passage of chronological time and narrative length.⁸³ However, as Caples points out, although Ruberg's division of the text is reasonably successful for that part of the Lancelot proper contained in Kluge's Volume I, it is less so for Volume II.⁸⁴ His division does not always reflect accurately the greater significance of some episodes over others.

In her study of the narrative structures in the Prose Lancelot Amelia Rutledge adopted some of the methods and terminology of the Russian Formalist school who were concerned with the basic structure of fictional narrative. She also used linguistic methods of tagmemic analysis in an attempt to discover the 'grammar' which orders the structure of the Lancelot proper narrative.⁸⁵ She gives a detailed analysis of the first two thirds of the romance, dividing the action up into segments,

which she then groups into major and minor sequences. Through this division of the text she seeks to elicit the characteristic pattern of the segments and the inner structure of the major sequences.⁸⁶

THE PATTERNING OF RELATIONSHIPS

Now that I have traced the origins and development of the Lancelot legend with reference to the MEG Prose Lancelot, and have outlined the main lines of research into the narrative structure of the Trilogy, I wish to turn to my own study of this central work of chivalric literature. My interest in the Prose Lancelot has been primarily in how it functions as a narrative text. Thus, I have been less interested in what might constitute a logical structural subdivision of the Prose Lancelot romances than in those narrative techniques which unify the Trilogy, both structurally and thematically, and shape it into a coherent work of art.

As the preceding survey of research has made clear, interlacing and the thematic development by analogy which it facilitates are two of the most characteristic narrative features of the work. An aspect of the pervasive analogical structure of the Prose Lancelot which has received little attention so far is the patterning of relationships amongst the main protagonists. There have, of course, been many studies of the portrayal of the central figures and their interaction with one another, but there has been no systematic analysis of how many of the main protagonists come to form constellations within the structure of

the narrative by virtue of particular relationships they have in common, rather than by virtue of their interaction (indeed, in some cases these figures need not be involved personally with one another at all). I have been particularly interested in exploring how the related narrative devices of juxtaposition, parallelism and analogy are employed not only to forge links between the independent experiences of certain figures within the action, but also to compare and contrast their responses to similar situations on a thematic level.

The Prose Lancelot has at its core the biography of Lancelot and the mainspring in the development of Lancelot's personal career is his unique and absolute love for Ginover, Artus' Queen. Within the greater context of the Trilogy it is essentially through the chivalric figure of Lancelot that the secular Arthurian world and the spiritual world of the Grail quest are intertwined. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that issues which are fundamental to Lancelot's portrayal should also be fundamental to the entire Prose Lancelot. Thus the most significant constellations of figures within the narrative are centred on Lancelot. These constellations are patterned on those relationships which circumscribe Lancelot's identity, i.e. his role as lover, as friend, as cousin and half-brother, and as father. Issues which arise out of the particular circumstances in which Lancelot realises these various roles become themes of wider implication (e.g. adultery and bastardy, the interaction of hereditary influence, free will and Providence; the primeval force of the blood tie, the concept of friendship) which are

reflected, modified, amplified and debated within the context of analogous relationships throughout the narrative.

In the three chapters that follow I shall analyse the portrayal of fathers and sons, brothers and cousins, and friends. As Lancelot's love relationship with Ginover is so fundamental to his portrayal, it necessarily impinges upon all his other relationships. Thus I have not devoted a separate chapter to his role as lover, for it must be a constant factor in the discussion of any aspect of his identity. I shall examine how the recurrence of the various relationships listed above is patterned throughout the Prose Lancelot, and how this constitutes an important element in the thematic development of the Trilogy. As a result of the close study of this patterning, I hope to explicate the degree of continuity and coherence of one aspect of the Prose Lancelot narrative and thus contribute to an understanding and assessment of the structural and thematic unity of the Trilogy in general. In addition, I shall seek to draw some conclusions about methods of characterisation in the Prose Lancelot.

Notes to Chapter One

In the notes that follow I have distinguished all those works of secondary literature which are studies based on the MHG version of the Prose Lancelot, rather than the OF, by marking them with an asterisk.

1. J. Frappier, 'La Naissance et l'Evolution du Roman Arthurien en Prose', GRIMA, IV/1 (Heidelberg, 1978), pp. 503-12 (p. 506). See also E. Köhler, 'Zur Entstehung des altfranzösischen Prosaromans', Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität, 5 (1955/56), pp. 287-92 (p. 291). F. Lot describes the Vulgate Cycle as a 'spicilège, florilège' in Etude sur le Lancelot en prose, second edition (Paris, 1954), p. 260.
2. See my introductory chapter, p. 1f.
3. J.D. Bruce in his review of F. Lot's study of the Prose Lancelot, RR, 10 (1919), 377-88, comments with regard to the length of the entire Vulgate Cycle: 'Moreover, in the subsequent history of European prose fiction there are no works that equal (or surpass) in length the five volumes under discussion, combined, except one or two of the vast French romances of the seventeenth century (e.g. Mlle. Scudéry's Le Grand Cyrus) (p. 379). *U. Ruberg, 'Lancelot ('Lancelot-Gral-Prosaroman'), Vfl. (Berlin/New York, 1984), V, pp. 530-46, notes (p. 534) that the MHG manuscript P contains 41,250 lines and Kluge's edition of the MHG Prose Lancelot based on this manuscript 54,800 printed lines. He calculates that the MHG Prose Lancelot is about 5 times the length of Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival and 3 times the length of the Jüngere Titurel.
4. J. Frappier, Etude sur la Mort le Roi Artu, roman du XIII^e siècle, dernière partie du Lancelot en prose, second revised

edition (Paris/Geneva, 1961), characterises the three romances as follows (p. 360): 'Le plan du Lancelot propre est narratif, celui de La Queste est symbolique et didactique, celui de La Mort Artu est dramatique'.

5. Frappier, 'Le Cycle de la Vulgate (Lancelot en Prose et Lancelot-Graal)', GRLMA, IV/1, pp. 536-89 (p. 584).
Frappier, A. Micha, 'Sur la Composition du Lancelot en prose', in Mélanges Félix Lecoy. Etudes de Langue et de Littérature du Moyen Age offertes à Félix Lecoy (Paris, 1973), pp. 417-25
and Ruberg, 'Lancelot', Vfl., V, pp. 538-39 provide concise surveys of many of the salient narrative devices employed to create the structural unity of the Prose Lancelot.
6. *R. Voss, Der Prosa-Lancelot: Eine strukturanalytische und strukturvergleichende Studie auf der Grundlage des deutschen Textes, Deutsche Studien 12 (Meisenheim am Glan, 1970), p. 13.
7. See my introductory chapter, p.14f. and p. 21ff.
8. See J.D. Bruce, The Evolution of Arthurian Romance, second edition, 2 vols (Gloucester, Mass., 1958), I, 368-73 and Lot, Etude Lancelot, pp. 127-29. However, Pauline Matarasso, The Redemption of Chivalry. A Study of the Queste del Saint Graal (Geneva, 1979) comments (pp. 232-33): 'The date of Map's death rules him out as the author of any part of the existing Lancelot cycle, yet it may be that at some earlier stage he made a contribution of sorts to the growing body of tales about Lancelot of the Lake. ... The ascriptions in the Queste and Mort Artu, long brushed aside as fantastical, are now treated less dismissively.' See further J.N. Carman, A Study of the Pseudo-Map Cycle of Arthurian Romance (Kansas, 1973), pp. 108-10. Grace Savage, 'Narrative Technique in the Queste del Saint Graal' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Princeton, 1973), (DAI, A 34 (1974), p. 5203), suggests (Chapter 2, 'The Telling of the Narrative') reasons inherent in the meaning of the romance for why the Queste should have been attributed to Walter Map.
9. Bruce, RR, 10 (1919), p. 377.

10. See in particular J.D. Bruce, 'The Composition of the Old French Prose Lancelot', RR, 9 (1918), 241-68, 353-95; 10 (1919), 48-66, 97-122.
11. Frappier, GRLMA, IV/1, p. 539 and pp. 584-89, reviews the arguments put forward by proponents of this approach.
12. Bruce, RR, 10 (1919), p. 378.
13. Lot, Etude Lancelot, Ch. 2, 'Du principe de l'entrelacement' pp. 17-28. Lot gives examples of how interlacing works and then concludes: 'Il est, non seulement invraisemblable, mais organiquement impossible qu'un roman agencé de la façon que nous venons d'étudier soit dû à une pluralité d'auteurs' (p. 28).
14. Lot, Etude Lancelot, Ch. 3, 'Du procédé chronologique', pp. 29-62. Lot concludes: 'En fait, il n'y a jamais d'erreur grave. Le fil chronologique ne casse jamais. Cela est significatif. Il paraît impossible qu'une succession d'auteurs ou de remanieurs aient pu se retrouver à coup sûr dans ce capharnaüm. Seul un auteur, et un auteur à la tête solide et claire, pouvait réussir ce tour de force' (p. 61).
15. Lot, Etude Lancelot, Ch. 4, 'Unité de plan et unité d'esprit', pp. 65-107. Lot comments: 'Il faut bien se rendre à l'évidence. Le Lancelot est traversé d'un double courant, chevalerie "terrienne", chevalerie "célestinienne". Tantôt ils se séparent, tantôt ils se confondent, mais ils coulent d'une même source. L'antinomie que le critique souligne est inhérente au moyen âge' (p. 106).
16. Lot, Etude Lancelot, p. 107.
17. Objections were raised in particular to Lot's conception of the continuity of the 'double esprit' (i.e. the courtly chivalric ethic and the ascetic chivalric code) throughout the Trilogy. See Bruce, R, 10 (1919), pp. 283-84; Frappier, GRLMA, p. 585f; Micha, Mélanges Félix Lecoy, p. 357.
18. A. Pauphilet, review of: F. Lot, Etude sur le Lancelot en prose (Paris, 1918), R, 45 (1918-19), 514-34 (p. 530).

19. A. Pauphilet, 'Sur la composition du Lancelot-Graal' in Le Legs du Moyen Age (Melun, 1950), pp. 212-17.
20. Frappier, Etude Mort Artu, p. 144.
21. Frappier, GRLMA, IV/1, p. 587. Here Frappier re-affirms the ideas on the authorship of the Prose Lancelot which he expressed in his much earlier Etude Mort Artu, pp. 122-46. In his later article Frappier does not take into account a counter argument which H.-G. Jantzen put forward to his 'architect' hypothesis. Jantzen, 'Untersuchungen zur Entstehung des altfranzösischen Prosaromans' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Heidelberg, 1966), argues (pp. 156-70) that the Queste del Saint Graal was the first part of the Trilogy to be written and that it was later linked with the Lancelot proper and the Mort Artu by means of interpolations. For a detailed consideration of what kind of a man the author of the Queste del Saint Graal might have been see Matarasso, Redemption of Chivalry, pp. 205-41.
22. Frappier, GRLMA, IV/1, p. 541.
23. Frappier, Etude Mort Artu, p. 146.
24. A. Micha, 'Etudes sur le Lancelot en Prose. II L'Esprit du Lancelot-Graal', R, 82 (1961), 357-78 (p. 357 and p. 365).
25. See Ruberg, Vfl., V, p. 533 and Carman, Pseudo-Map Cycle, p. 97. E.C. York, 'The Concept of Treason in the Prose Lancelot', KFLQ, 12 (1965), pp. 117-23, makes an interesting case for supporting Frappier's authorship theory by examining the evidence of different legal traditions contained within the Prose Lancelot.
26. *H. Fromm, 'Zur Karrenritter-Episode im Prosa-Lancelot. Struktur und Geschichte', in Festschrift für Kurt Ruh zum 65. Geburtstag, edited by D. Huschenbett, K. Matzel, G. Steer and N. Wagner, Medium Aevum deutsch (Tübingen, 1979), pp. 69-97 (p. 69).
27. *H.-H. Steinhoff, 'Artusritter und Gralsheld: Zur Bewertung des höfischen Rittertums im Prosa-Lancelot', in The Epic in

- Medieval Society: Aesthetic and Moral Values, edited by H. Scholler (Tübingen, 1977), pp. 271-89 (p. 274).
28. E. Vinaver, The Rise of Romance (Oxford, 1971), p. 74 n. 2.
 29. Voss, Eine strukturanalytische und strukturvergleichende Studie, p. 96f. See also Jantzen, 'Untersuchungen zur Entstehung', p. 78f. and for the narrative technique used to reflect this pluralism of values see Janice Smith Heiple, 'Spatial Form in "La Mort Artu": A Narrative Web Untangled' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1980). (DA1, A41 (1981), pp. 4707-08), p. 13; p. 56; p. 162.
 30. C.S. Lewis, Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature, collected by Walter Hooper (Cambridge, 1966), was the first to use the term 'polyphony' in this sense (p. 133).
 31. Lot, Etude Lancelot, p. 61 and p. 63.
 32. A. Pauphilet, Etudes sur la Queste del Saint Graal attribuée à Gautier Map (Paris, 1921; reprinted Paris, 1968), p. 167.
 33. Frappier, Etude Mort Artu, pp. 351-65.
 34. P. Imbs, 'La journée dans la Queste del Saint Graal et la Mort le Roi Artu', in Mélanges de philologie romane et de littérature médiévale offerts à Ernest Hoepffner (Paris, 1949), pp. 279-93.
 35. *U. Ruberg, Raum und Zeit im Prosa-Lancelot, Medium Aevum. Philologische Studien, 9 (Munich, 1965), p. 17.
 36. Ruberg, Raum und Zeit, pp. 184-85.
 37. Savage, 'Narrative Technique in the Queste del Saint Graal', Ch. 3, 'The Treatment of Time'.
 38. Ruberg, Raum und Zeit, p. 142.
 39. Micha, 'Sur la composition', p. 422: 'Ces retours à autrefois élargissent le cadre temporel, des préfigurations rendent sensible l'idée que le passé portait en germe et que le présent attend son épanouissement dans l'avenir.'
 40. Frappier, GRLMA, IV/1, p. 510.

41. Nancy L. Vine, 'Permutations in Genealogy: A Study of Kinship Structure in Old French Hagiography, "Chansons de Geste" and Romance' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Princeton, 1981), (DAI, A42 (1981), p. 1143).
42. See also Jean Marie Dornbush, 'Conjointure and Continuation in the Old French Prose-Lancelot: Essays on Form and Craft in Thirteenth Century Romance' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Princeton, 1976), (DAI, A37 (1976/77), p. 5809), p. 320. I examine the structural importance of genealogy in Ch. 2, p. 79ff.
43. See Jantzen, 'Untersuchungen zur Entstehung', p. 28; also R. Hartman, La Quête et la Croisade. Villehardouin, Clari et le Lancelot en prose (New York, 1977).
44. Lot, Etude Lancelot, p. 17.
45. Lewis, Medieval and Renaissance Literature, p. 134.
46. W. Kellermann, Aufbaustil und Weltbild Chrestiens von Troyes im Percevalroman, Beihefte zur ZfdPh, 88 (Halle, 1936), p. 15.
47. Kellermann, Aufbaustil und Weltbild, I. Teil, Ch. 2.
48. J. Frappier, Le Roman breton, second edition (Paris, 1959), pp. 27-29, 112-14; Chrétien de Troyes, l'homme et l'oeuvre (Paris, 1957), pp. 171-75; Etude sur "Yvain ou le Chevalier au lion" de Chrétien de Troyes (Paris, 1969), pp. 63-65.
49. W.W. Ryding, Structure in Medieval Narrative (The Hague, 1971), p. 162.
50. Ryding, Structure, pp. 66-82. See also Vinaver, Rise of Romance, pp. 74-75, 85-86.
51. Christian von Troyes, Der Karrenritter (Lancelot), edited by W. Foerster (Halle, 1899; reprinted Amsterdam, 1965), 1.26. I use the customary French title, Le Chevalier de la Charrette, to refer to Chrétien's romance.
52. Christian von Troyes, Erec und Enide, edited by W. Foerster (Halle, 1890; reprinted Amsterdam, 1965), 1.14. Gottfried von Strassburg, perhaps the most self-conscious poet amongst

the authors of the courtly romances, makes a similar distinction in his excursus on the merits of contemporary poets in Tristan, edited by P. Ganz, *Deutsche Klassiker des Mittelalters* 4, 2 vols (Wiesbaden, 1978), I, 11.4619-35 and 11.4703-07.

53. See above under 'Authorship', p. 43ff.
54. Dornbush, 'Conjecture and Continuation', pp. 76-104; A. Leupin, 'Narrateurs et scripteurs dans la Vulgate "Arthurienne"', Diaphe, 20 (1939), pp. 83-109. On narrators in the Queste see Savage, 'Narrative Technique in the Queste del Saint Graal', pp. 130-60.
55. Dornbush, 'Conjointure and Continuation', p. 81; Leupin, 'Narrateurs et scripteurs', p. 89, p. 103, p. 106.
56. This is the general subject of Dornbush's dissertation, 'Conjointure and Continuation'.
57. D.F. Kelly, Sens and Conjointure in the Chevalier de la Charrette (The Hague, 1966), pp. 166-203.
58. N.J. Lacy, 'Spatial Form in the Mort Artu', Symposium, 31 (1977), 337-45 (p. 337).
59. Carol Chase (of Knox College, Illinois), 'The Art of Entrelacement in the 13th-Century Lancelot', an unpublished paper delivered to the International Arthurian Society Conference held at Glasgow University in August 1981 (22 pp.).
60. Ryding, Structure, p. 60.
61. Vinaver, Rise of Romance, p. 122.
62. Vinaver, Rise of Romance, p. 105.
63. *Cynthia B. Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry in the Prose Lancelot' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Harvard, 1970), (DAI, A32 (1971), p. 1505), p. 63.
64. Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry', p. 71.
65. On this point see Carol Chase's review article of research into the narrative technique of interlacing, 'Sur la théorie

- de l'entrelacement: Ordre et désordre dans le Lancelot en prose', MPh, 80 (1983), 227-41 (pp. 229-30 and n. 18).
66. Rosemond Tuve, Allegorical Imagery: some mediaeval books and their posterity (Princeton, 1966), Ch. 5 'Romances'.
 67. Tuve, Allegorical Imagery, p. 365.
 68. Tuve, Allegorical Imagery, p. 433.
 69. Tuve, Allegorical Imagery, p. 363.
 70. A.D. Zuurdeeg, 'Structure and Meaning in La Mort le Roi Artu' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1973), (DAI, A34 (1974), pp. 6006-07).
 71. J. Frank, The Widening Gyre (Bloomington, 1968).
 72. N.J. Lacy, 'Spatial Form in Medieval Romance', YFSt, 51 (1974), 160-69 (p. 160).
 73. Lacy, 'Spatial Form in the Mort Artu', pp. 339-44. For a similar approach see H. Blake, 'Etude sur les structures narratives dans La Mort Artu (XIII^e siècle)'. Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire, 50 (1972), 733-43.
 74. Heiple, 'A Narrative Web Untangled', p. 18.
 75. Heiple, 'A Narrative Web Untangled', p. 162.
 76. Carol D. Chase, 'Etude sur la première partie du Lancelot en prose roman du XIII^e siècle' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1977), (DAI, A38 (1977/78), pp. 2830-31), pp. 147-56.
 77. *Meredith L.P. Stoehr, 'The War in Flanders: Themes and Structure of an Episode in the Prosa-Lancelot' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1978), (DAI, A39 (1978), p. 3569).
 78. Chase, 'Sur la théorie de l'entrelacement', seems to have overlooked research done by Germanists on the Prose Lancelot, for in her call for investigation into the quest motif (p. 240), she makes no reference to work already undertaken by Germanists on this subject.

79. Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry', p. 43.
80. Chase, 'The Art of Entrelacement', pp. 2-3 (of the original typescript).
81. Amelia A. Rutledge, 'Narrative Structures in the Old French Prose Lancelot' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Yale, 1974), (DAI, A35 (1974/75), p. 2954), Ch. 4 'A Hierarchical Structure: the "Preparations for the Queste"'.
82. *U. Ruberg, 'Die Suche im Prosa-Lancelot', ZfdA, 92 (1963), pp. 122-57.
83. Ruberg, Raum und Zeit, pp. 115-21.
84. Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry', pp. 21-23.
85. Rutledge, 'Narrative Structures', Ch. 1 'Methodology and Terminology' and Ch. 2 'Analysis of the Prose Lancelot'.
86. For a critical appraisal of Rutledge's terminology, methodology and conclusions see Chase, 'Sur la théorie de l'entrelacement', pp. 234-39.

CHAPTER TWO

FATHERS AND SONS

The most prevalent familial tie in the Prose Lancelot is the relationship of father and son. A listing of the dramatis personae in the Trilogy reveals the high incidence of this relationship amongst the main protagonists:

<u>Fathers</u>		<u>Sons/Fathers</u>		<u>Sons</u>
Ban	—	{ Lancelot Hestor	—	Galaat
Bohort	—	{ Bohort Lyonel	—	Helies
Artus	—	{ Morderet Lohos	—	2 unnamed sons
Claudas	—	{ Dorins Claudin		
Galahot	—	Galehodin ¹		

The degree of interest in paternal/filial relations evident in the Prose Lancelot arises out of the importance and significance which the prose romancer attaches to Lancelot as the father of Galaat.

When Jean Frappier contested the opinion of Albert Pauphilet on the authorship of the Prose Lancelot, reasserting his belief that there was one man, the 'architecte', who was responsible for the structural conception of the Trilogy, he expressed surprise at the lack of attention Pauphilet had paid to the relationship of Lancelot and Galaat:

Il est singulier que Pauphilet n'ait attaché aucune importance au fait que Lancelot est le père de Galaad: là est pourtant le noeud de la construction; cette clé de voûte n'a pu être inventée que par un auteur qui avait dans l'esprit la vision de l'édifice tout entier

ou qui, pour le moins, n'envisageait pas un Lancelot sans une Queste ni une Queste sans un Lancelot. (2)

Twenty four years later Frappier repeated his insistence on the importance of this relationship:

C'est contre cette donnée que se brisent les théories hostiles à l'unité de structure du Lancelot en prose. (3)

That Lancelot is the father of Galaat is indeed of fundamental importance, but not only for the structural unity of the Prose Lancelot. The concept of Lancelot, the best knight in the world and an adulterer, fathering a bastard, Galaat, who becomes the spiritually pure and virgin Grail winner, is at the one time surprising, complex and questionable. One method the prose romancer employs to illuminate the ambivalence surrounding Lancelot's relationship to Galaat is to explore, throughout the Trilogy, issues which are of central importance to their relationship through other pairs of fathers and sons. Thus in these paternal/filial relations certain themes recur constantly, i.e. adultery, illegitimacy and hereditary determination. The variation in circumstance and context in which these themes occur allows a divergent approach to and presentation of the same phenomena. In this chapter I shall examine the manner in which pairs of fathers and sons help to define the particular nature of Lancelot's relationship to Galaat and how consequently they reinforce not only the structural, but also the thematic coherence of the Prose Lancelot.

First, a brief look at the origin and development of the tradition surrounding the knight who achieves the quest for the Grail will demonstrate the conceptual importance of the

relationship of father and son to the Prose Lancelot.

Uncle and nephew supplanted by father and son

In the first Arthurian Grail romance, Chrétien de Troyes' Conte du Graal, Perceval was the Grail winner; he remained so in subsequent Grail romances derived from Chrétien until the Prose Lancelot romancer broke with tradition by making Lancelot's son, Galaad, the Grail knight. It seems, however, that this break was not a clean one, for in the OF manuscripts there is some confusion about the identity of the Grail knight in a reference to him early in the Lancelot proper: when Claudas is incognito at Artus' court, he is astounded by the Queen's beauty which, it is commented, was only surpassed by Heliene sans peir and Amide, the mother of the Grail knight. Elspeth Kennedy has noted that in 14 of the extant OF manuscripts which contain this passage (28 in all) and which belong to several different redactions this reference identifies the Grail winner as Perlesvaus, or, in a few of them, as Perceval. A close examination of the manuscripts has led her to conclude that the identification of the Grail knight as Perlesvaus is 'close to the original reading in the archetype of the extant MSS'.⁴ Consequently, Kennedy has retained Perlesvaus in her edition of the 'non-cyclic' Prose Lancelot.⁵ She has further justified her decision by arguing that the reference to Perlesvaus/Perceval in the 'non-cyclic' Prose Lancelot, which does not include the quest for the Grail by Galaad, might simply be 'an allusion to a famous adventure in the past and a means of setting the Lancelot story in the context of existing tradition by relating it to one of the great themes of the

Arthurian past, the Grail quest'.⁶ Alexandre Micha, on the other hand, has interpreted the original reading as 'Galaad' in his edition of the Lancelot proper. He conjectured that the occurrence of Perlesvaus/Perceval was in the first instance the 'correction' of a scribe, who, familiar with the romances of Chrétien de Troyes and Robert de Boron, thought that 'Galaad' was a mistake. This 'correction' was perpetuated by other scribes.⁷ This confusion is restricted to the beginning of the 'cyclic' Prose Lancelot, for the rest Galaad is indisputably the knight destined to achieve the Grail adventure. There is no difficulty in the MHG version of the Trilogy, for at that point where there is variation in the OF manuscripts the MHG text states unequivocally that Galaat is the Grail winner (I,29,3ff).⁸

The substitution of Galaad for Perceval entailed a radical change in the significant kinship structures of the Grail knight's family, for Perceval's kinship with the Grail keepers is through his maternal uncle, where Galaad is predestined to be the Grail winner as the last in an unbroken line of fathers and sons. This shift in emphasis from the maternal uncle/nephew relationship to that of father and son is interesting from two points of view, as a break with literary tradition and as a reflection of the dynastic interests of the twelfth and thirteenth century aristocracy.

In Chrétien de Troyes' Conte du Graal Perceval's family background is left extremely vague. The names of his parents are never revealed, although Perceval does learn from his mother that he is of noble lineage. His mother also tells him how he lost

his father and two unnamed brothers as a result of their involvement in chivalric activity. More importantly, he later learns from a maternal uncle who is a hermit that his kinship with the Grail keepers is through another maternal uncle, the Fisher King's father.

In the OF chansons de geste and Arthurian romances, as in the MHG adaptations of this epic literature, there is a pronounced emphasis on the closeness of the maternal uncle/nephew relationship, for example Karl and Roland in the Rolandslied, Marke and Tristan in Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan and, ubiquitous in the Arthurian romances, Artus and his 'swester sun' Gawan.⁹ In their studies of this phenomenon both William Farnsworth and Clair Bell reached the conclusion that the glorification of the maternal uncle/nephew relationship was a vestige of a prehistoric society organised on a matrilineal principle, i.e. where:

... kinship is traced and determined through the mother, the children being regarded as the relatives, and frequently as the heirs, of the mother and the maternal relatives. The husband's position is relatively unimportant. His adherence to his own brothers and sisters is closer than to his wife and her progeny. In the matrilineal family group the eldest maternal brother exercises the duties of a father to the children. (10)

Both Farnsworth and Bell draw attention to Tacitus' comment in Germania XX that among the Teutons the relationship between maternal uncle and nephew was as close, if not closer, than the tie between father and son.¹¹ The special relationship between the maternal uncle and his nephew in OF and MHG epic literature appears to be the sentimental survival of a custom long after its basis in the social structure had disappeared.¹² The

authoritative historian of feudal society, Marc Bloch, supported the conclusions reached by Farnsworth and Bell, noting, however, that the impact of the Romans with their absolute primacy of descent in the male line did not extinguish 'all traces of a more ancient system of uterine filiation'.¹³ He sees the sentimental importance which epic literature attached to the relationship of maternal uncle and nephew as an expression of the dual character which kinship in the medieval Western world had developed or retained. Another leading medieval historian, Georges Duby, has offered a more immediately sociological explanation for the emphasis given to the tie between maternal uncle and nephew. He has looked closely at the institution of marriage in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and the implications of it for the families involved. He explains the close ties of affection between the children of the new couple and their mother's brothers as compensation for the sacrifice of some of its substance which the wife's family made in giving her away to another family.¹⁴

The vagueness surrounding Perceval's lineage and his connection with the Grail keepers clearly became a great source of interest to other romancers, for so many of the Continuations of the incomplete Conte du Graal attempt to clarify his family background.¹⁵ Wolfram von Eschenbach in particular, retelling the romance of Perceval for a German audience, worked out a very elaborate kinship network for the Grail knight.

In the trilogy which comprises Robert de Boron's Joseph and Merlin and the anonymous Didot Perceval¹⁶ there is a slight shift of emphasis in the kinship structure of the Grail keepers

as portrayed by Chrétien. In Joseph Robert de Boron refers to the final Grail keeper as the tiers hom, i.e. the third keeper of the Grail after Joseph of Arimathea and his brother-in-law Bron. This tiers hom is identified as Perceval in the Didot Perceval. The Didot Perceval romancer follows Robert de Boron in the portrayal of the tiers hom as the son of Alain le Gros, who is himself the son of Bron and therefore the maternal nephew of Joseph of Arimathea. Thus Robert introduces the father/son relationship alongside that of maternal uncle/nephew in tracing the descent of the Grail keepers.

In his portrayal of the genealogy of the Grail winner the Prose Lancelot romancer chose to place the emphasis very firmly on the paternal/filial relationship. He already had a partial model for this in Robert de Boron, and within one strand of the Lancelot tradition as it has survived the father/son relationship had been given a degree of prominence, i.e. in Ulrich von Zatzikhoven's biographical romance we learn a little about Lanzelet's tyrannical father, King Pant.¹⁷ In his efforts to construct an appropriate genealogy to substantiate Galaat's identity as the Grail knight the prose romancer is far more precise about his forefathers than earlier romancers had been about Perceval. A thorough exposition of Galaat's genealogy on the paternal side is given in the Gral-Queste, when a holy man interprets for Lancelot a dream he had about seven kings and two knights (III,181,21-187,17). The holy man names and identifies these seven kings as Lancelot's direct ancestors; Galaat descends 'von rechter linien' (III,184,16) through an unbroken line of fathers and sons which stretches back

to Celydoine, the paternal nephew of King Mordrain, whom Joseph of Arimathea had converted to Christianity.¹⁸

Where the prevalence of the maternal uncle/nephew relationship has been interpreted as the survival in legends of a prehistoric society organised on a matrilineal basis, the emphasis on the paternal/filial relationship which the Prose Lancelot evidences may be interpreted as a reflection of the attitudes of the thirteenth century chivalric world. From his study of medieval French genealogies George Duby has observed that from the beginning of the eleventh century at the latest there was a 'tendency for family lineages to adhere to a single branch' and that there was 'a tightening of the family around the male line, from which emerged a dynastic spirit'.¹⁹ There was a flowering of genealogical writing in the period around 1160, for example the Flemish (Flandria generosa) and Angevin genealogies (Gesta consulum andegavorum) were reworked by Breton of Amboise and John of Marmoutier respectively, and two new genealogical works about the counts of Angoulême and Angers were being written. At the same time Master Wace of Jersey wrote the Roman de Brut (1155), based on the royal national chronicle of Geoffrey of Monmouth, the Historia regum Britanniae (1136), and he also wrote the Roman de Rou (1160-74), a history of the Norman dukes. Both of these histories were structured in part according to genealogical principles. Duby has made a particular study of Lambert of Ardres' History of the Counts of Guines (Historia comitum Ghisnensium, 1194), for he regarded it as 'the richest and most important of all writing of the (genealogical) kind'.²⁰ In his

reading of these genealogical writings Duby has found evidence that there was a strict limitation on the number of marriages allowed amongst the sons of a family. Frequently only one of them was permitted to marry and have legitimate children.²¹ A dominating feature of these genealogies was male primogeniture. This, together with the 'increasingly sharp emphasis',²² which came to be laid upon lineage from the thirteenth century on, may account to some extent for the pronounced emphasis on agnatic descent in the Prose Lancelot (composed about 1215-30).

Duby has pointed out that an incentive to have the genealogical history of a family written was often the need to legitimise some power or authority which the family had. Nancy Vine has echoed this opinion, commenting about national chronicles such as Wace's Roman de Brut that 'lineage is exploited as a (genealogical) structure through which the antecedents of a particular group may be specified and glorified'.²⁴ In order to oust Perceval and establish Galaat as the Grail winner the Prose Lancelot romancer has adopted the genealogical structure of contemporary family histories and national chronicles, and the propagandistic use to which this can be put. He details and glorifies Galaat's lineage, and in doing so impresses upon the reader his hero's superior claim over Perceval to be the Grail knight.

The Prose Lancelot romancer retains the traditional association of the Grail knight with the Grail keepers through the maternal line, although this aspect of Galaat's descent is left very vague compared with the detail of his descent through the

male line. In the course of the Lancelot proper occasional brief references are made to the fact that Galaat is descended from the line of Grail keepers, for his mother, King Pelles' daughter, is of the lineage of Joseph of Arimathea (e.g. I,123,23ff.). In addition to contemporary genealogical writings the prose romancer also had the Bible with its long genealogies as a model for the significance to be attached to lineage. The prose romancer effects the interweaving of the Grail legend with biblical history in the context of the Arthurian world through the construct of the genealogy of Lancelot and his son Galaat. When Galaat appears at Artus' court at the beginning of the Gral-Queste he is introduced as being 'von dem hohen geschlecht des konigs David und Joseph von Aramathie' (III,9,13). The agnatic pattern in Galaat's lineage, outlined above, is reinforced by the portrayal of Galaat as a descendant, indeed the final descendant (III,309,11), of the biblical king David and his son Solomon through Lancelot's mother Alene (I,43,26ff;I,92,25ff.).²⁵ This aspect of Galaat's genealogy is not documented. This is scarcely surprising in view of the formidable problem of charting Galaat's descent from David and Solomon, for by linking Galaat with them the prose romancer has done no less than to present biblical history as Galaat's own history:

... c'était rapporter à sa personne la longue suite des prophéties et des préfigurations où le Moyen Age reconnaissait le Christ, c'était faire d'un héros de roman le but, la raison suprême de tout l'Ancien Testament. L'épisode de la Nef de Solomon n'est autre chose que l'étonnant transfert à Galaad de la préhistoire mystique de Jésus. (26)

While passing reference is made to Galaat's connection with the House of David in the course of the Lancelot proper (e.g.

I,43,26ff.), he is to learn about this aspect of his lineage directly only from a letter which Solomon had left for him in the ship he had constructed to convey Galaat to the heavenly city of Saras (III,310,9f.). This letter explains, furthermore, how the bed on the ship was built with wood from the biblical Tree of Life. The romancer of the Gral-Queste has incorporated and adapted to suit his own purposes the ancient legend of the Cross, which was so popular in the Middle Ages and of which there are several different versions.²⁷ In this legend a link was made between the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden and the tree which became Christ's cross. Those figures of the Old Testament who were interpreted as prefigurations of Christ, i.e. Moses, David, Solomon, were all associated with this tree. Moses fashioned his rod from it, David sang in its shade and Solomon wanted to construct his temple from it. The Gral-Queste romancer has altered the legend with reference to Solomon; Solomon builds a ship and on it he places a bed for Galaat constructed out of the sacred wood. Through this alteration the romancer has created a direct link not only between Solomon and Galaat, but also between Galaat and David, Moses, and Adam and Eve. Galaat's chivalric career as the Grail winner has become of universal significance.

The fusing of Galaat's genealogy with biblical history allows the Gral-Queste to be understood in some measure as a poetic continuation of the Bible. However, not only did the prose romancer incorporate biblical history into his romance, he also adopted a narrative pattern from the Bible which had become familiar through a method of exegesis. The Medieval theologians

inherited from the Church Fathers the interpretative tool of typological analysis. Through this method of analysis it was understood, for example, that Cain prefigured Judas, while Adam, Moses, David and Solomon were all prefigurations of Christ. I quote, as a general preface to what follows, a useful working definition of biblical typology:

A hermeneutical (interpretive) method or principle used to establish the relevance of an earlier biblical text for a later period by emphasising points both of basic similarity and of essential dissimilarity centred on so-called types or antitypes. Based on a concept of continuous evolution of revelation, typological interpretation stresses a relationship of continuity in which a type is viewed as an earlier and an antitype as a later revelation of an act, event, person or institution. ... Whereas the type often is regarded as little more than a shadow adumbrating a reality evident in an antitype, the antitype is considered as a further, more explicit revelation. The teleological relationship is emphasised primarily to identify the antitype in the ongoing process of revelation. (28)

Typology is essentially a method of interpretation applied to the Bible. There has been a trend among modern scholars of medieval literature to regard typology as a 'spezifisch mittelalterliche Denkform' and therefore an element of composition to be found in secular works of literature also.²⁹ Werner Schröder has provided a useful corrective to this view, demonstrating how frequently the modern application of typological interpretation has extended far beyond the use made of it by medieval authors,³⁰ but there is a general consensus of opinion that the Gral-Queste nevertheless admits a typological interpretation, for it is conceived in part as a poetic continuation of the Bible.³¹ I say 'in part', because in literary terms the Gral-Queste is a romance, and care must

therefore be taken not to lose the poetic texture and density of the work through too rigid an analysis from one point of view.³² Within the context of the Gral-Queste as a poetic continuation of the Bible, Galaat becomes a figure analogous to Christ. However, in the passage where the history of Solomon's ship is explained it seems almost as if Galaat has occupied Christ's place in history, for in relating the legend of the Cross, although Moses, David and Solomon are referred to, there is no mention of Christ 'and the reader is uncomfortably aware that the obfuscation is deliberate, that Christ has been somehow bypassed'.³³ However, it is not so much the startling portrayal of Galaat as a Christ figure that I am interested in, as in that aspect of Lancelot's relationship to Galaat which many scholars have recognised as being typological:

Lancelot, dessen eigentlicher Name Galaad ist (II,7 u.8), steht zu seinem Sohn in der Position eines Vorläufers. ... Es ist ein Verhältnis typologischer Überbietung. (34)

The typological relationship between Lancelot and Galaat

In the Prose Lancelot the Arthurian chivalric code of the Lancelot proper is superseded by the spiritual code which obtains in the Gral-Queste. The sense of the temporal succession of the Grail chivalry is conveyed primarily through the filial relationship of Galaat to Lancelot, although this relationship serves at the same time to guarantee the continuity of the two worlds. Throughout the Lancelot proper Lancelot is recognised and acclaimed as 'der beste ritter der welt'. However, in the latter part of the Lancelot proper, when Lancelot undergoes

adventures which have a direct connection with the quest for the Grail, we learn that a better knight than he will arrive (e.g. I,617,4ff.). Lancelot yields his title of best knight to his son, who is pre-eminent in the spiritual world of the Gral-Queste. Lancelot, the best knight of the Arthurian world, fathers the knight whose spiritual virtue is such that he can achieve the quest for the Grail. Neither Lancelot nor Galaat are dubbed knights by Artus, although they become his most illustrious knights. Lancelot had contrived to receive his sword from the Queen rather than from Artus (I,138,28ff.) and he knights his son Galaat (III,3,17ff.), thus leading him into the world in which he had been so successful himself. Galaat joins the Round Table and immediately occupies the 'Sorglich Sess', thereby demonstrating that he will complete the adventure for which the Round Table was founded (III,100,18ff.). Continuity is further guaranteed in that, during the quest for the Grail, Lancelot accompanies Galaat for half a year, assisting him in the completion of adventures (III,344,10ff.). With Lancelot as the father of Galaat the values of secular chivalry which obtain in the Lancelot proper are not so much rejected in the Gral-Queste as seen to be prefatory to the religious chivalry propounded by the hermits.³⁵ Through the relationship of Lancelot and Galaat, Arthurian society is conceived as the rightful forerunner, the type, to the spiritually rarefied atmosphere of the Grail world, the antitype.

The typological method of interpretation, as defined above, emphasises 'points of both basic similarity and essential

dissimilarity' in types and antitypes. Hereditary continuity between father and son in Lancelot's kin is expressed through physical likeness. When the Queen sees Galaat for the first time, she instantly recognises Lancelot in him (III,25,7ff.), just as Hestor's mother in the Lancelot proper had immediately recognised Lancelot as Ban's son on meeting him for the first time (II,310,16ff.). When, during his visit to the castle of Corbenic, Bohort is shown Galaat as a baby of two months, 'ducht yn wie er Lancelot vor im sehe, wann es im so wol geleich as eins mannes figur dem andern gelichen m8cht' (II,624,25ff.). Similarly, Lancelot recognises the likeness between Bohort and his son, Helies, when he meets the latter (II,656,6f.). In view of this emphasis on physical likeness, it is surprising that initially in the Gral-Queste, when Galaat is brought to Lancelot to be knighted, neither Lancelot nor Bohort recognise Galaat (III,3,2ff.), although they had both met him in the Lancelot proper. Pauline Matarasso suggests that this may be a variation on the narrative device of incognito which is so ubiquitous in the Arthurian romances; she interprets the failure of Lancelot and Bohort to recognise Galaat in the Gral-Queste on a symbolic plane as evidence of their lack of spiritual awareness.³⁶

Lancelot and Galaat also have certain personality traits in common. Although it is the condition of all knights errant to be 'lone riders', this characteristic is particularly marked in the portrayal of Lancelot. Throughout his career he strives to remain as autonomous as possible, avoiding feudal ties and close companionship with other knights (e.g. I,509,19f.;

II,105,29ff.; III,473,11ff.).³⁷ This trait of independence is even more marked in Galaat, as Pauphilet comments: 'Il n'a point de famille: sa naissance irrégulière, sa jeunesse secrète lui permettent de se dispenser de sentiments filiaux; ... Il n'a pas de suzerain terrestre, pas d'amis, de vassaux, de parti.'³⁸ The most salient trait, however, which Lancelot and Galaat share, is their capacity for single-minded devotion, though it is in the application of this quality that they differ most radically. Lancelot forfeited the adventure of the Grail because of his adulterous love for Ginover (II,438,14ff.). He devotes himself to the service of the Queen, where Galaat devotes himself to the service of God. Lancelot's love for Ginover is the inspiration for all his great deeds (II,439,15ff.), during his quest for the Grail Galaat's longing to know and experience the full mystery of God becomes ever greater (III,375,14ff.).

The prefacing of a hero knight's story with an account of his father's life was a narrative pattern familiar from a number of verse romances (e.g. Alexander and Fénice in Chrétien de Troyes' Cligès, Rivalin and Blanscheflur in Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan and Gahmuret and Herzeloyde in Wolfram's Parzival).³⁹ The account of the father's life could often be regarded as a complete story within itself, but its primary function was to serve as a partial explanation and subsequently prefiguration of the hero knight's story. This pattern is clearly present in the Prose Lancelot, though the proportions are different. The Lancelot proper could hardly be called a preface, for the account of Lancelot's career occupies more narrative space than that of

Galaat, and yet the sense of the Gral-Queste is that Lancelot is a prefiguration of that more perfect knight, his son Galaat. There is, however, a fundamental difference between the prefiguration of son by father in the Prose Lancelot and that found in the verse romances. Lancelot's prefiguration of Galaat has the added dimension of being typological. The history of the Grail legend in the Prose Lancelot is a history of salvation, which is couched, 'in mikrokosmischer Verkürzung' as it were, within the framework of the Christian history of salvation.⁴⁰ Lancelot achieved many adventures in his career which were acts of caritas and deliverance. When Lancelot liberated the Dolorose Garde (I,154-214), and freed the prisoners of Gorre (I,599-II,24), but there were a number of adventures which he could not complete, e.g. the freeing of Symeu from the flames (I,616,4ff.) and the rescuing of his grandfather's head from the boiling fountain (II,525,13ff.).⁴¹ These were achieved by the saviour figure of his son Galaat. Lancelot and Galaat's experience of the Grail reveals the depth of their spiritual virtue and their comprehension of God's grace. Lancelot is allowed to experience partial knowledge of the Grail (III,349,1ff.), while the full mystery of God is eventually revealed to Galaat in his final and complete contemplation of the Grail (III,380,13ff.).

The typological relationship which exists between Lancelot and Galaat is one of the most important structural features of the Prose Lancelot. However, it embraces only one aspect of Lancelot's personality and presence in the Prose

Lancelot, and, indeed, only one aspect of his relationship with his son. Lancelot is much more than 'a shadow adumbrating a reality evident in an antitype ... '. In order to delineate and clarify the complexity of the concept of Lancelot as the father of the Grail winner, the prose romancer employed other narrative devices such as juxtaposition, contrast, comparison, parallelism and, above all, analogy. These narrative devices are used in the portrayal of other fathers and sons, for it is through them that the prose romancer is able to define more precisely the nature of Lancelot's and Galaat's relationship.

The theme of adultery

In discussing the authorship of the Prose Lancelot Myrrha Lot-Borodine asks: 'Et surtout comment aurait-il pu concevoir cette idée profondément troublante: faire du rédempteur, Galaad, le fils bâtard du pécheur Lancelot?'⁴² This bald question has to be answered circumstantially. There is an ambivalence which surrounds the figure of Lancelot from the outset of his career. On the one hand he becomes generally recognised as 'der beste ritter der welt' through the magnificent deeds he performs; he is the foremost knight at the Round Table, and Artus is only too aware of his value (e.g. I, 533, 12ff.). On the other hand he poses a great threat to the stability of Artus' court, for Lancelot draws the inspiration for his prowess and valour from his love for the Queen. When, early in the Lancelot proper, Galahot quizzes Gawan, the Queen and Artus about what they would give to have Lancelot's company, there is tragic irony in Artus' reply that he would give half of all he possessed, save

only his wife, Ginover (I,285,8ff.). When in the Tod des K nig Artus Artus eventually has to recognise Lancelot's adultery, he can scarcely believe that such an outstanding knight could be guilty of such behaviour (III,536,17ff.). Lancelot's tragically misplaced love is one of the main contributing factors to the eventual downfall of Artus' kingdom.⁴³

Artus is surprised by Lancelot's adultery and yet he is guilty of the same sin. He is unfaithful to Ginover twice; he succumbs to the wiles of Gartissie, a Saxon enchantress, and Genuvere, the false Queen who claims to be the real Ginover. The context in which Artus' affair with Gartissie takes place puts the episode into a particular focus. During the day's battle against the Saxons Lancelot had proved himself once again to be an invaluable support to Artus, indeed, on this occasion in a very personal fashion, for we learn how Artus was unhorsed three times and how each time Lancelot came to his aid (I,460,22f.). Gartissie had bewitched Artus (I,458,6ff.) and so at the end of the day's battle he eagerly accepts an invitation to go to her. He takes his nephew Guerehes with him, who, it is related laconically, lies with an unnamed Saxon damsel while his uncle is occupied (I,462,2f.).⁴⁴ Gartissie treacherously takes Artus and Guerehes prisoner and they remain in her power until Lancelot later effects their release. At the same time as Artus and Guerehes were disporting themselves in the Saxon castle, Lancelot and Galahot had gone to their respective ladies, Ginover and the Lady of Maloaut. It is on this evening that Lancelot and the Queen at last consummate their long-standing love. The occasion

is marked by the disappearance of the crack in the shield which the Lady of the Lake had sent to the Queen. Ginover interprets the disappearance of this crack as evidence of Lancelot's great loyalty to her (I,462,23ff.). The prose romancer juxtaposes the two superficially similar adulterous episodes and makes no comment other than to underline the fact that Artus had been duped (I,461,34f.). Underlying the juxtaposition, however, is a contrast and that contrast is decidedly in Lancelot's favour. Lancelot rescues Artus in battle and from Gartissie. Artus is the dupe of Gartissie, while the quality of Lancelot's love is confirmed by the disappearance of the crack in the shield.

The theme of adultery in the Prose Lancelot starts early in the Lancelot proper with Claudas, the usurper of Lancelot's patrimony and, like Artus, a key figure in the development of Lancelot's career. Claudas has an affair with the wife of Phariens, his most faithful and loyal knight. The issues raised by Claudas' adultery are explored in the narrative from an interesting angle. Phariens has a keen sense of the legal niceties of the feudal code. He debates at length the duties of a vassal knight, the allegiance he owes his overlord and the circumstances under which a knight would be justified in renouncing his homage (e.g. I,74,2ff.). However, as Elspeth Kennedy comments: '... Pharien does not appear to consider that adultery committed by Claudas with his vassal's wife would justify the renunciation of homage, although in most medieval law books this does provide sufficient grounds'.⁴⁵ Phariens only challenges Claudas indirectly, feigning ignorance of Claudas'

identity as the adulterer, and asking advice from him as his lord about how to deal with his wife's lover (I,22,6ff.). If we consider the presentation of the theme of adultery within the context of the entire Prose Lancelot, Phariens' response to Claudas' adultery must influence our assessment of Lancelot's relationship with the Queen. The fact that such a legalistic knight as Phariens does not consider it necessary to renounce his allegiance to Claudas on account of Claudas' adultery suggests perhaps that we should not judge Lancelot's adultery too severely, particularly as Lancelot has no feudal tie with Artus. Phariens' wife had yielded to Claudas' desires, because she saw a relationship with him as a means of furthering her husband's career (I,21,28ff.), and the tone of this relationship is in keeping with the rest of the action connected with Claudas, i.e. it is pragmatic and opportunistic. By contrast the love that Lancelot shares with Ginover is not self-seeking, but an absolute love founded on mutual respect and admiration.

Through a close examination of all the incidental episodes in the Lancelot proper (i.e. the independent episodes which occur as the adventures of the knights of the Round Table within the course of the main narrative action), Cynthia Caples has been able to establish that the two stereotyped situations which occur 'separately or in combination in virtually every one of the "incidental" episodes in the first book of P (Codex palatinus germanicus) are adultery and contested land ownership'.⁴⁶ Her detailed study of these incidental episodes has shown how they can provide a gloss on the issues which are of central importance

to the romance and how this gloss can influence our interpretation of the work as a whole. In the first part of the Lancelot proper Caples establishes that in many of the incidental 'adulterous' episodes the couple accused of adultery by a jealous husband figure were in fact innocent. The effect of such unjust accusations, she suggests, is, by implication, 'to give a condemnatory tone to what, in the main plot, is Artus' position, without raising the issues at stake in Ginover's love for Lancelot'.⁴⁷ Caples observes, however, a shift of emphasis in the relation of 'adulterous' episodes in the second part of the Lancelot proper:

In the Lancelot II, the tone is darker, the prospects dimmer. The romance no longer encourages the reader to believe in the possibility of happiness through a love relationship, and the adultery stories now emphasise a purity of the accused which blackens Lancelot's sin by contrast, while condemnation of the jealous husband has been abandoned or left to God. (48)

This shift in emphasis coincides with a harsher assessment of concupiscence in general in that section of the Lancelot proper which is frequently referred to as the 'Préparations à la Quête'.⁴⁹ The 'Préparations à la Quête' represent about one third of the total Lancelot proper (i.e. Kluge, II, 135-829) and constitute that part of the romance which effects to some extent the transition from the secular world of Arthurian chivalry to the ascetic world of the Grail quest:

L'idéal ascétique et l'idéal courtois se juxtaposent donc sans se concilier ni se heurter violemment dans cette partie du Lancelot en prose: cette fois le terme de double esprit est parfaitement justifiée. (50)

Up until the 'Préparations à la Quête' there is virtually no explicit condemnation of Lancelot's adultery with the Queen.

Such overt condemnation as there is comes from two figures who are external to the world of Artus' court and the Round Table, and who have a greater understanding of events and their patterning than those actually involved in the action do. On one occasion, when the Lady of the Lake talks to Ginover about her love for Lancelot, she refers to it explicitly as sunde (I,471.4ff.), although she does not develop the point further, but rather accepts the relationship as an inevitable fact. Similarly, Meister Helies, the wise man sent from Artus' court to interpret Galahot's dream, mentions to Galahot the sunde of the Queen's love for Lancelot (I,505,34ff.). Galahot, however, suppresses any discussion of the matter. Even in the 'Préparations à la Quête' criticism of Lancelot's adultery as such is oblique. When Ginover realises that Lancelot must forfeit the Grail adventure on account of his love for her (II,438,14ff.), he promptly reassures her that it has been her inspiration that has made him the best knight in the world (II,439,4ff.). In an episode which forms an integral part of the quest for the Grail Lancelot learns from a hermit that his failure in the quest will be because of his unkuscheyt (II,533,6ff.). In the Gral-Queste itself, with its emphasis on virginity and chastity, Lancelot is castigated severely for his unkuscheyt (III,170,12ff.). However, what is interesting with regard to the presentation of the theme of adultery is that 'ce n'est pas le crime adultère que la kyrielle des ermites, acharnés après le salut de cette âme d'élite, reproche à Lancelot, non, c'est le péché de concupiscence ...'.⁵¹

The issue of Lancelot's adultery with Ginover, then, is

couched in the narrative in such a way as to neutralise as far as possible the more negative aspects of it and to concentrate rather on the strength of Lancelot's commitment to Ginover and the inspiration he draws from her. As Galaat is the bastard son of Lancelot the adulterer, it is scarcely surprising that a companion theme to adultery in the Prose Lancelot is that of bastardy.

The theme of bastardy

There is a high incidence of fathers with illegitimate sons amongst the main figures of the Prose Lancelot. Of the sons listed at the outset of this chapter six (i.e. half of them) are bastards:⁵²

<u>Fathers</u>	<u>Illegitimate sons</u>
Ban	Hestor
Lancelot	Galaat
Bohort	Helies
Artus	Lohos, Morderet
Claudas	Claudin

Within the context of the Arthurian society in the Lancelot proper illegitimacy does not seem to be a factor which detracts from a knight's status. It is mentioned as a fact in passing that Lohos (I,174,25ff.) and Claudin (II,715,28ff.) are illegitimate sons, but in neither case is any inference drawn from this information. Hestor conceals his identity from Lancelot for a long time and is upbraided by Gaheries for doing so (II,464,12ff.). However, Hestor's reluctance to admit his blood tie with Lancelot is more out of a sense of unworthiness than of social stigma. When Lancelot discovers Morderet's true identity as Artus'

illegitimate son born in incest (II,601,5ff.), there is no expression of surprise or shock. Rather he is preoccupied by the thought of the potential consequences of a blood feud should he kill Morderet (II,601,20ff.).

Neale Carman has sought parallels between the figures and events of the Prose Lancelot and those of contemporary history. The marked 'leniency toward illegitimacy of birth in the pseudo-Map Cycle' he ascribed to the possible influence of William Longsword, the bastard grandson of Geoffrey the Fair of Anjou.⁵³ The restriction on marriage which Georges Duby noted in his reading of genealogical literature as an effect of the stress laid on primogeniture was not relaxed until the end of the twelfth century and early thirteenth century. The prohibition on marriage did not, however, preclude other sexual relations. In the History of the Counts of Guines, completed between 1201 and 1206, Lambert of Ardres acclaims the sexual prowess of the counts. Duby draws our attention to the interesting fact that Lambert only relates the extra-marital relations of the Counts before they are married, the assumption being that any liaisons that might have occurred during marriage are suppressed out of a sense of propriety.⁵⁴ This might well be of relevance to our assessment of the adulterous relationships of the male protagonists in the Prose Lancelot.

Lambert tells us that the founder of the line, Arnoul, had a couple of bastard children by different mothers, and that the second Arnoul engendered four bastard sons while in search of adventure in England during his youth. Arnoul II also had two

legitimate sons, the younger of whom began his career by fathering a bastard son. The offspring of these wayward unions were recognised as rightful members of the house. Lambert praises his contemporary, Count Baudouin II, for having provided his illegitimate sons with an excellent education and for marrying off his illegitimate daughters well. Thus, illegitimacy was 'a normal part of the structure of ordinary society - so normal that illegitimate children, especially males, were neither concealed nor rejected. They were just as noble as the other offspring ...'.⁵⁵ In view of this, the high rate of illegitimacy in the Prose Lancelot is perhaps less surprising than it would at first appear to be. However, Duby himself makes the following interesting comment with reference to the courtly romances: 'But adultery, though consummated, was barren. Bastardy was too serious a matter to be treated lightly even in literature'.⁵⁶ This remark has prompted me to demonstrate that, in addition to the social historical explanation of contemporary attitudes to marriage and illegitimacy, there is inherent in the subject matter of the Prose Lancelot itself an explanation for the high incidence of bastardy.

A close examination of the Prose Lancelot reveals that the majority of bastard sons listed above were conceived in extraordinary circumstances.⁵⁷ What is immediately striking in this list of illegitimate sons is the consistent pattern of bastardy within Lancelot's kin group. This pattern becomes more pronounced when we notice that certain features are common to the conceptions of Hestor, Helies and Galaat. In all three cases

the fathers are unwitting accomplices to the act of conception, for they are manipulated through magic to satisfy the wishes of others.

We learn in the course of the Prose Lancelot that Hestor is Lancelot's half-brother and the illegitimate son of Ban. A brief and bald statement is made about how Ban, when on his way to Artus' coronation, fell in love with the Duke of Mares' daughter and lay with her, whereupon Hestor was conceived (II,306,25ff.). One of the chief concerns of the Gral-Queste is the sin of unkuscheyt and yet in that text Ban is praised unreservedly for having been a good man (III,185,10ff.). This is puzzling, but there is an explanation to be found in the Old French Estoire de Merlin, one of the romances which were later additions to the trilogy of the Prose Lancelot. There it is related that Ban spent a night at the castle of Agravadain des Mares on his way to Artus' coronation. Ban was already married to Alene and, it would seem, a faithful husband, but Merlin cast a spell over him, causing him to fall in love with Agravadain's daughter.⁵⁸ Thus, although Ban committed adultery, it was not of his own volition and the episode remained an isolated incident in his career.

Bohort has an illegitimate son called Helies, the result of his union with King Brandemagus' daughter.⁵⁹ Bohort distinguished himself at a tournament held by King Brandemagus, but showed himself impervious to the charms of Brandemagus' daughter, whom he had won as his lady through his outstanding performance. The daughter fell desperately in love with Bohort and conspired with her old nurse to win him to her. This was

contrived with the aid of a magic ring and Helies was conceived. Like Ban, Bohort was not master of himself and could not therefore be held morally responsible for what happened. God recognised the union of Bohort and Brandemagus' daughter as being innocent and intervened to thwart the Devil:⁶⁰

Und umb das die geschicht von den kinden unwijssenheit geschach der sunden, da thet doch got unser herre sine barmherczekeit darczu, das er nit enwolde das ir magethum umb sunst verlorn wer; dan er wolt das hohe frucht davon keme ... (II,80,2ff.).

This is the only stain on Bohort's otherwise chaste record, and, although reference is made to it in the Gral-Queste (III,213,9ff.), he is none the less considered worthy of being one of Galaat's companions in the quest for the Grail. The interest of Bohort's son, Helies, lies solely in the contribution he makes to the pattern of illegitimate sons amongst Lancelot's kin, for he has no part to play in the narrative. We learn at the very end of the Lancelot proper that he is brought to Kamalot to be knighted by Bohort (II,827,31ff.), but that is the last we hear of him, although we are told that he becomes the Emperor of Constantinople and that there is much to relate about him elsewhere (II,79,30ff.).

The conception of Helies is paralleled very closely by that of Galaat. Lancelot is duped by means of a magic potion into making love to King Pelles' daughter. Although Lancelot's relationship with the Queen is sinful, there is virtue in the absolute fidelity he shows in his love for her. The effect of the magic potion is to make him believe that he is making love to Ginover. The narrative leaves us in no doubt as to how we are to understand the union of King Pelles' daughter with Lancelot.

His is an act of delusion, while hers is apparently a selfless act, for she wished to give birth to the Grail winner and consequently the saviour of her land (II,296,9ff.).⁶¹ As in the case of Bohort and Brandemagus' daughter, there is divine intervention, so that good may spring from the union, despite Lancelot's sinful past:

Aber er (Lancelot) bekant sie wiedder gott und die heiligen kirchen in sunden und nit darumb das der herre, da all barmherzikeyt inn ist, urteilt nach den geschichten des sunders, sah an die samenuung nach den geschichten den vom land, als der ghener der nit wolt das sie alle tag in jamer und armut waren; so gab er yn solch frucht zu enpfangen und zu gewinnen das von jungfrauen blümen, die da verlorn were worden, ward gemacht Galaat, der sere starck und früm ritter, der die hoen aventure des grales zu ende bracht und der sich saczt an die sorglich stat der tafelrunden, da hien sich nye keyn ander ritter gesaczt, er enwere dott. (II,296,18ff.).

This divine act of mercy effectively dissociates Galaat from his father's sinful past.

The conception of Galaat is of central importance to the Prose Lancelot. As the Grail winner Galaat must be spiritually pure, and thus it is not surprising that the romancer should have taken such care to be explicit about the interpretation of the circumstances of his conception.⁶² The conceptions of Hestor and, in particular, Helies assist us in understanding and accepting the extraordinary nature of Galaat's origin. The blamelessness of Ban and the innocence of Bohort, himself destined to be Galaat's companion, deflect our attention away from Lancelot's adulterous relationship with Ginover, and concentrate it instead on the innocence of Lancelot in the conceiving of Galaat. Through the use of parallel incidents the prose romancer persuades us

obliquely to accept Galaat's purity and not to associate Lancelot's sin of adultery with him. The narrative emphasis falls instead on Galaat as the spiritual heir to his father's pre-eminence in the secular world: 'Die Vaterschaft Lancelots gereicht Galaad zum Ruhm (20,26). An keiner Stelle fühlt sich der Verfasser zu irgendeiner Rechtfertigung der Illegitimität veranlasst ...'.⁶³

There is a variation on the theme of extra-marital relationships and illegitimate sons in the figure of Artus. Like Ban, Lancelot and Bohort, Artus too is the victim of magic and the object of divine intervention. However, although the same compositional elements are present, their import is very different in Artus' case. In the course of the Prose Lancelot we learn that Artus had four relationships (two of them adulterous) with women other than Ginover. There is only a reference to his relationship with Lisanors (I,174,25ff.) and his sister (II,601, 8ff.), but his affairs with Gartissie, the Saxon sorceress, and Genuvere, the false Queen, are reported in the narrative. In his affair with Gartissie Artus is duped, for, as Ban, Bohort and Lancelot were, he is robbed of his reason by magic (I,479,4ff.). Where the false Queen is concerned, however, there are no mitigating factors; Artus allows himself to be deceived into believing that the impostor, Genuvere, is the rightful Queen by the attentions she pays him. The injustice towards Ginover, the real Queen, is only righted by an act of divine intervention. God's intervention in the conceptions of Galaat and Helies was a positive act, in the false Queen episode

it is a negative one. Genuvere and her father Bertelac, who had conspired with her, are afflicted with a dreadful disease as a punishment (I,535,30ff.), and Artus himself suffers an acute feeling of pain which alerts him to the evil of his behaviour (I,537,26ff.). Although there are some extenuating factors which lessen Artus' moral guilt, his lack of continence contrasts sharply none the less with Lancelot's unswerving fidelity to Ginover. This contrast is extended to Lancelot's and Artus' respective kin. Whereas Hestor, Bohort and, indeed, Lancelot himself prove themselves to be exemplary knights in their chaste conduct during their adventures, Artus' nephews, in particular Guerehes and Agravant, reflect their uncle's amorous susceptibilities in the way they behave towards the women they encounter.⁶⁴

Artus has two illegitimate sons, Lohos and Morderet. Like Bohort's son Helies, Lohos has no significant role to play in the romance and is merely mentioned in passing, although the circumstances of his conception are none the less carefully detailed:⁶⁵

... und Lohos des konig Artus sun, den er gewonnen
hett ee dann er die koniginne zu wib geneme, by
einer schonen jungfrauwen, die was genant Lisanors.
(I,174,25ff.).

It appears to be common knowledge within the text that Lohos is Artus' son (I,179,36). It is worthy of note that in Ulrich von Zatzikhoven's Lanzelet the figure of Lohos, known as Lôût, is the legitimate son of Artus and Ginover.⁶⁶ In portraying Lohos as Artus' bastard son the prose romancer has extended the theme of

illegitimacy which pervades the Trilogy and thus draws attention again to Artus' amorous proclivities. However, at the same time the prose romancer does seem to be at pains to underline the fact that Lohos was not the issue of an adulterous relationship, in an attempt perhaps to lessen any sense of moral guilt incurred by Artus in the reader's eyes. The picture the prose romancer paints of Artus is very complex, for, although negative aspects of his nature are exposed, he is none the less still regarded by the chivalric world as a great and illustrious king.⁶⁷

For the greater part of the Lancelot proper Morderet is presented as a brother of Gawan.⁶⁸ Thus he is included in the brief thumbnail sketches which the prose romancer makes of the salient characteristics of Gawan and his brothers. The accuracy of the very negative description of Morderet given here (II,131-32) is borne out by subsequent events.⁶⁹ Morderet's true identity is revealed by a very old man whom Lancelot and Morderet encounter together in a forest. This man is dressed 'mit einem wissen cleit in wise eins geistlichen mannes' (II,598,14ff.), a description which links him with so many of the hermit figures in the Gral-Queste. Again like the hermit figures, he has knowledge of the future and foretells to Morderet how he will bring about the destruction of the Round Table and the death of Artus (II,599,1ff.).⁷⁰ He further tells Morderet that it is not King Loth who is his father, but a greater King. However, he is not able to inform him completely about his parentage, for Morderet kills him in a rage, as the old man knew he would. Unknown to Morderet, Lancelot takes a letter from the dead man's hand which

was intended for Morderet:

... und wiss furware das konig Artus din vatter
ist, der dich gemacht hat mit konig Loths wib von
Dorcanie ... (II,601,9ff.).

Whether Artus' relations with his sister were adulterous as well as incestuous is not disclosed. In fact the circumstances of Morderet's conception are not explained at all. The Estoire de Merlin, which explains so much that is elliptical in the Prose Lancelot, provides again a detailed account of this incident.⁷¹ We learn there that at the time the barons had assembled to elect a successor to Utherpendragon, Artus, who was not yet a knight, lay with his sister, though he was ignorant of the fact that they were siblings. It would seem that, as in the case of Ban's adultery and the conception of Lohos, the romancer of the Estoire de Merlin is concerned to give a positive gloss to a negative incident in the Prose Lancelot. Throughout the Lancelot proper Artus appears to be unaware that Morderet is his son.⁷² Morderet never fully learns about his true parentage, for Lancelot suppresses the information contained in the old man's letter. Thus in the forged letters which Morderet disseminates in Logres to win the support of Artus' subjects, he explicitly states that he is not Artus' nefe, as he knows from the old man he murdered, but he does not identify himself further (III,639,11ff.). However, when in the Tod des König Artus Artus learns of Morderet's treason, he refers, much to his companion's surprise, to Morderet as his son (III,698,11ff.). Artus suddenly realises that a dream he had the night Morderet was conceived (II,599,18ff.) was an allegorical foretelling of

his death at the hands of his son.

There has been much speculation about the source of the motif of Morderet's incestuous birth. On the basis of an examination of all earlier texts which mention Morderet James Bruce concludes that, though Morderet had had incestuous relationships in some texts, his identity as Artus' son born in incest was the invention of the author of the Mort Artu.⁷³ This new departure in the portrayal of Morderet is highly significant for the structure of the Prose Lancelot. With reference to Morderet's incestuous origin Jean Frappier comments that there is 'an almost universal tradition of heroes born in incest'.⁷⁴ Morderet, however, is not so much a hero as an anti-hero. In many respects he functions as a contrast and a parallel figure to Galaat. Both are born out of wedlock as the result of an extraordinary union, but where the circumstances of Galaat's conception are carefully detailed, those of Morderet's are left unexplained. Lancelot learns much about his son before and during the quest for the Grail, for Galaat is the predestined Grail winner, a saviour figure who is eagerly awaited. Artus is not only ignorant of the true identity of Morderet, but also of his true nature. Where Galaat is a positive figure, Morderet is a negative one. Both exercise an irrevocable influence on the Arthurian world. In achieving the quest for the Grail Galaat realises the objective for which the Round Table was founded, and thus renders its existence redundant. Although Lancelot triggers off the sequence of events which leads to the downfall of Artus' kingdom, it is at the hands of his own son that Artus

meets his end. Where Lancelot is led towards salvation by his son, Artus is brought to his death by Morderet. The issue of Ban's kin have God's blessing, where it seems to be implied that Morderet's evil nature is a result of the unholy union of Artus and his sister.

The above examination of patterns of adultery, extra-marital relationships and illegitimacy reveals that there are numerous parallels to be drawn between Lancelot and his kin on the one hand and Artus and Morderet on the other. However, where a positive emphasis is given to the incidents concerning Lancelot and his kin, there is a corresponding negative emphasis in those episodes concerning Artus and Morderet. Associated with the themes of adultery and illegitimacy in the Prose Lancelot is the theme of the inheritance of sin. It is the presentation of this theme in the course of the Trilogy which I now wish to explore.

The inheritance of sin

Illegitimacy may not be a matter for concern amongst the members of the chivalric society in the Prose Lancelot, but it is considered a fact of some consequence by a figure who is external to the Arthurian world and who has a similar insight into the spiritual and moral virtue of men as the hermits in the Gral-Queste do. The holy man who castigates Artus severely for not having carried out his duties as king in accordance with the Christian concept of kingship, opens his attack on Artus with an accusing reminder of the illegitimacy of his birth and that he was conceived within the context of an adulterous relationship (I,242,7ff.).

This accusation is an oblique reference to the legend of how Uther, in the shape of the Duke of Tintagel, engendered Arthur with the same Duke's wife, Ygerne. After the death of the Duke of Tintagel in battle, Uther married Ygerne and thus, presumably, made Arthur legitimate, which allowed him to inherit. This event is retold in the Estoire de Merlin.⁷⁵ He seems to imply that Artus must bear the burden of his father's sin.⁷⁶ There is no subsequent reference to Artus' bastardy in the Prose Lancelot and the idea that a father's sins are passed on to his son is not pursued any further where he is concerned. There is a minor variation on this theme in the figures of Claudas and Galahot. Both have feelings of guilt about lands they have usurped, for usurpation is regarded as sinful. Thus both insist that, in the event of their death, their sons must not inherit the usurped lands and consequently, it would seem, any sin that might attach to them (Claudas-I,28,13ff.; Galahot-I,511,15ff.).

When Lancelot experiences his first chivalric failure in attempting to complete an adventure which has an explicit link with Grail matters, he is informed by his forefather Symeu that a better knight than he will be the Grail winner and that his own lack of success is attributable to the sin of adultery which his father, Ban, committed (I,617,4ff.). It would appear that, like Artus, Lancelot must carry his father's guilt. And yet, as in Artus' case, the issue is never raised again. Subsequently Lancelot's lack of success in the quest for the Grail is regarded solely as a result of his own unchaste behaviour in his relationship with Ginover. This detail of sin inherited by

Lancelot from his father seems to be at variance with the interpretation of Ban's adultery which, as I suggested earlier, the Gral-Queste and the Estoire de Merlin seem to offer, i.e. that because of Merlin's spell, Ban could not be held responsible for his adulterous act. This confusion of theme is most probably a consequence of a pluralistic authorship of the Vulgate Cycle. As scholars are agreed that the Estoire de Merlin is a later addition to the Prose Lancelot trilogy, it could be that a later romancer decided to reinforce the pattern of chastity in Lancelot's kin, regarding this as more significant than the theme of inherited sin which the romancer of the Lancelot proper had included in the complex web of motivation and causation he had spun as the romance progressed. The fact that, according to the Lancelot proper, Lancelot's sins are not transferred to his son may be interpreted as a method of underlining the exceptional nature of Galaat and highlighting the role of God's grace in the special circumstances of his conception.⁷⁷

There is a marked discrepancy in the interpretation of the theme of inherited sin offered by the Lancelot proper and the Gral-Queste. In a conversation about the responsibility of the individual for his own salvation, a hermit in the Gral-Queste states categorically to Lancelot that sin cannot be inherited:

Von den dotsunden dreyt der vatter synen last und der sune das syn. Und der sune gewinnet nummer teyl an des vatter sunden, noch der vatter an des sunes, dann yderman als er es verdienet hat, darnach sol im gelonet werden. (III, 188, 14ff.)

The radically different interpretation of this theme has generally been cited as evidence of the difference in authorship between the

Lancelot proper and the Gral-Queste.⁷⁸ However, Hans Fromm has seen the divergence of opinion as a reflection of 'eine alte und im 12.Jh. wieder aktualisierte Diskussion, die bei der Anselm-Schule, bei Abälard, bei Hugo von St. Victor und in vielen Sentenzsammlungen ihren Niederschlag gefunden hat. Sie hatte sich auseinanderzusetzen mit Exod.20,5 ego sum dominus Deus tuus fortis, zelotes, visitans iniquitatem patrum in filios in tertiam et quartam generationem, wo die Frage der Vererbbarkeit der aktuellen Vatersünden positiv entschieden scheint'.⁷⁹ Although the Lancelot proper and the Gral-Queste do present diametrically opposed views on the same issue of the inheritance of sin, they none the less do achieve a common purpose, i.e. they emphasise how Galaat is dissociated from his father's sins.

Although the Lancelot proper and the Gral-Queste strive to dissociate Galaat from Lancelot's sin, at the same time they both lay great emphasis on Galaat's illustrious lineage. In the Lancelot proper references are made to Lancelot's and his cousins' noble descent (e.g. I,92,25ff.), and on the occasion of both Helies' and Galaat's conceptions great stress is laid on the nobility of their respective parents (II,79,26f.; II,296,7ff.). In the course of the two romances we learn that Galaat's descent embraces the line of Grail Keepers, the House of David and a line stretching back to Celydoine, one of the first converts of Joseph of Arimathea. The interrelationship of lineage and virtue as the two qualifications for nobility 'formed the theme of a long protracted debate' in the chivalric society of the Middle Ages.⁸⁰ I wish now to examine how this debate is reflected in the Prose

Lancelot.Heredity and self-determination

There is an overt belief current within the chivalric society of the Lancelot proper that heredity is a determining factor in the development of an individual. It is generally assumed that good parents will engender good children and that the opposite is also true (e.g. II,302,9ff.; II,310,18ff.). The Lady of the Lake expresses this common assumption when she tells Lancelot that his noble lineage predestines him to be a great man: 'Von so hohem geslecht als ir sint enmag nymer böse man werden' (I,124,23f.). And although the Gral-Queste may denounce the belief in inherited sin, it none the less regards lineage as a positive determining factor in the development of a knight's personality, as a hermit comments to Bohort:⁸¹

'Sicher Bohort, ist es das die rede von den ewangelien ist an uch behalten, ir sollent syn ein güt ritter und war. Wann als unser herre sprach "der güt baum dreyt güt frucht", und ir sint die frucht von ser guten baumen, wann uwer vatter, der konig Bohort, was der besten ritter eyner den ich ye gesach und was sere barmherczig und demütig. Und die mütter, die konigin, was ein von den besten frauwen die ich in langer zitt ye gesah. Die zwey waren ein eynig baum und ein eynig floss mit gerechter ee, und die wil das ir sint die frucht, sollent ir billich güt sin, dwyl das die baum, daruss ir sint komen, gut waren.'
(III,225,7ff.)

The immediate chronological flow of the Lancelot proper narrative is punctuated from time to time by information which allows the reader a much greater understanding of the ultimate significance and pattern of events. The partial revelation of lineage, the anticipation of future events in the lives of

Lancelot and Galaat and the certain knowledge that Galaat will achieve the Grail adventure, evoke an atmosphere of predestination which becomes dominant in Galaat's progress during the Gral-Queste.⁸² However, in counterpoint to this is a theme of self-determination which is given programmatic expression on a number of isolated occasions by Lancelot and his kin.

Prior to becoming a knight Lancelot has a long conversation with the Lady of the Lake, who discourses to him on the origins, role and function of knighthood (I,120,3ff.). As the Lady of the Lake has kept Lancelot in ignorance of his parentage, Lancelot can rely on no one but himself for his reputation and standing, although, once he has demonstrated his independent spirit, she does eventually relent enough to tell him that he is of good birth.⁸³ Lancelot's initial ignorance of his own identity leads him to develop a firm belief in the individual's ability to cultivate personal valour. In talking to the Lady of the Lake, he recognizes the immutability of certain factors about one's existence (e.g. physical appearance I,119,33ff.), but he rejoices in the freedom of each individual to develop spiritual virtue, should he wish to do so (I,119,33ff.). Armed with confidence in this knowledge, Lancelot sets out on his career as a knight and, indeed, wins himself a great reputation by virtue of his own deeds. The extent to which he realises this philosophy of self-determination is evidenced when his friend Galahot offers him a kingdom. Lancelot refuses it, for he will hold no lands except those which are rightfully his by inheritance, and these he intends to win back from the usurper Claudas through the moral

strength of his own valour (I,509,30ff.).⁸⁴ Lancelot's ability to achieve this becomes credible in the Tod des König Artus, where in his battle against Artus' kin Lancelot can summon forces which will rally to his aid, not through feudal obligation, but on account of services Lancelot had rendered as an individual knight (III,558,14ff.).

The theme of self-determination expressed and actualised by Lancelot in the Lancelot proper is translated in the Gral-Queste into an explanation of and insistence on the responsibility of the individual for his own salvation in conjunction with the grace of God. In answer to the hermit who had commented on his good and noble lineage (III,225,7ff.), Bohort expresses the same belief in the individual's capacity to cultivate personal valour as Lancelot had voiced to the Lady of the Lake. Bohort develops the argument further, denying the determinative influence of heredity, once the individual has accepted the Christian belief:

'Herre', sprach Bohort, 'als der man komet von bössen baumen, das ist zu sagen von bösen vatter und mutter, und er verwandelt sich von bitterkeyt in süssikeyt als bald als er enpfehet die heilig cristenheit und den heiligen glauben, darumb düncket mich das es nit engeet nach vatter und nach mütter das er sy güt oder böse, wann nach des menschen herczen. ...'
(III,225,16ff.)

However, there is an important additional consideration in Bohort's argument. He reveals a greater spiritual comprehension in recognising the necessary catalyst of grace in the individual's spiritual progress:⁸⁵

'... Wann was er da mit gutes dut, das komet von gnaden des heiligen geystes, und was er da mit böses düt, das kömet von bedrúbniss des fyndes.'
(III,226,1ff.)

Lancelot's success in the Gral-Queste is limited, for he has to recognise and atone for the sinful nature of his earlier life. On the very first page of the Prose Lancelot we learn that Lancelot was baptised Galaat (I,1,7), because, as we learn later, he was destined, or more precisely, was given the opportunity, to become the Grail winner. When Lancelot seeks to know why a voice called him: 'viel herter dann ein stein und viel bitterer dann ein galle und viel nacketer dann ein aspe' (III,79,9f.), a hermit explains how God had endowed him not only with all the ability to become a great and good knight, but also with the ability to distinguish between good and evil and thus to direct his course through life (III,89,9f.). In loving Ginover Lancelot had tragically misplaced those qualities granted to him. Lancelot grows to understand the error of his previous conduct and seeks to make amends, but his spiritual progress is slow and limited. The realisation and acknowledgement of his sin seems to rob Lancelot of confidence in the independence of his spirit. When an old hermit interprets the dream Lancelot had about seven kings and two knights, Lancelot is greatly comforted to learn of Galaat's excellence, envisaging that Galaat will pray for the good of his soul (III,188,9ff.). However, the hermit is quick to correct him, impressing upon him the responsibility he must accept for his own salvation (III,188,14ff.). Later, Galaat himself reinforces the hermit's caution, advising Lancelot that nothing will be as effective as his own efforts towards salvation (III,346,3f.). Lancelot has to learn to understand the nature of grace and to trust God.

The given knowledge that Galaat is the Grail knight, and the assurances that he will succeed, detract from his interest as a narrative figure. Within the text itself his spiritual incorruptibility leads some to wonder whether he is indeed mortal (e.g. III,61,11ff.; III,316,4ff.). And yet there are indications, that, although Galaat is destined to win the Grail by the grace of God, he must achieve it none the less through his own merit. There are moments when he is unsure of himself, e.g. he expresses anxiety about the number of people he, Parzifal and Bohort killed in fighting against one hundred aggressive knights in Scotland, for he feels that it was not their place, but rather God's, to punish (III,317,1ff.). The correctness of his action is, of course, justified in the text subsequently (III,317,19ff.), but none the less it seems that Galaat too must be the 'artisan de son propre salut'.⁸⁶

The interaction of heredity and self-determination is a theme of the utmost importance in the definition of the relationship between Lancelot and Galaat. The degree of its importance is indicated by the extent to which it is mirrored, developed and explored by the prose romancer through other pairs of fathers and sons. The popular belief, referred to earlier, that good fathers will have good sons, and, by the same token, that bad fathers will have bad sons, is invalidated by a series of three fathers and their sons: Claudas-Dorins, Claudin; Bandemagus-Meleagant; Artus-Morderet.

Good fathers - bad sons; bad fathers - good sons

These fathers and their sons form a constellation in the structure of the Prose Lancelot, not just on account of their parallel familial relationships, but also because of a certain parity in their social status and pronounced common traits in their personalities. Claudas, Bandemagus and Artus are all kings, though Claudas and Bandemagus are vassal kings where Artus holds his lands from no one but God. Claudas, Meleagant and Morderet appear in quite different parts of the Prose Lancelot narrative and have nothing to do with one another directly, but they become linked in the reader's mind because their actions reveal that they have a treacherous nature in common.

Claudas is perhaps the most complex and most fascinating figure in the Prose Lancelot. The prose romancer describes in unaccustomed detail his physical appearance and his nature and temperament (I,26,17ff. - 27,16).⁸⁷ The portrayal of Claudas consists of a list of paradoxical and conflicting characteristics. However, although both good and bad aspects of his person are depicted here, as the Lancelot proper progresses the dominant impression of Claudas is a negative one. He is ambitious, ruthless and a usurper. The overriding characteristic which emerges in him is that of treachery. Claudas may be a treacherous figure, but his son Dorins had the potential to become a great knight. The common populace recognise him as 'ein schon ritter milte, kune und starck' (I,51,1).⁸⁸ When Dorins falls at the hands of Lyonel and Bohort, Claudas is grieved. He recognises in Dorins those virtues in which

he himself was lacking (I,51,37ff.) and which, in his opinion, would have enabled Dorins to become one of the greatest and most powerful men in the world (I,61,28ff.), in fact the equal of Artus, and would eventually have been victorious over him (I,63,10ff.). While Dorins was alive Claudas had feared his generous nature, but he had been ready to revise his opinions on the exercise of miltekeyt by a ruler, after his secret visit to Artus' court where he had observed how Artus won support through his generosity.⁸⁹ In his lament over Dorins' death Claudas regrets that Dorins will no longer be able to have an improving influence on him and in particular on his attitude to miltekeyt (I,62,36ff.).

Dorins' youth and early death preclude the development of his figure. What we learn of his nature comes largely from Claudas, who, as a father, may be expected to be favourable, but Claudas has another son, a bastard son called Claudin, who has an independent existence in the narrative, in particular in the episode of the war in Flanders.⁹⁰ Claudin proves himself to be an outstanding knight and radically different in attitude to Claudas himself. In the war in Flanders Claudin supports his father against the forces of King Artus, who champion Lancelot's right to his patrimony, which was usurped by Claudas during Lancelot's childhood. In the last stages of the war, as his imminent defeat becomes clear, Claudas treacherously deserts his army and flees to his allies the Romans (II,775,10ff.). Claudin, however, remains to support Claudas' men through their defeat and to hand over the key to the besieged city

honourably (II,775,25ff.). He recognises the 'frumkeyt und ritterschafft' (II,775,22) of Bohort and Lyonel and is prepared to be a knight in their service. Despite the enmity between his father and Lancelot, he trusts in Lancelot to treat him honourably as a knight (II,775,28ff.). Claudin's noble behaviour prompts Bohort to call him the best knight after Lancelot. Gawan, otherwise generally considered to be second to Lancelot, affirms Bohort's judgement (II,776,14ff.). Claudin's virtue is later recognised in the Gral-Queste in a way that some critics have found surprising and inappropriate, given that he is the bastard son of Claudas, the enemy of Lancelot's kin.⁹¹ He is one of the nine knights who, together with Galaat, Bohort and Parzifal, make up the apostolic number of twelve at the final feast in Corbenic, before the Grail is removed from Britain to Saras (III,373,7ff.). Claudin's appearance at this feast may be interpreted as a reinforcement of the theme that the sins of the fathers are not visited on the children.

A reversal of the portrayal of Claudas' relationship with his sons is found in the case of Meleagant and his father, Bandemagus. Bandemagus is a popular figure who is respected and trusted (I,265,23f.). Galahot appoints him custodian of his lands in his absence (I,510,29ff.), he becomes a worthy member of the Round Table (II,442,1ff.), and Artus is greatly distressed by his accidental death at the hands of Gawan during the quest for the Grail (III,389,15ff.). Meleagant, however, is treacherous and arrogant. The description of Meleagant resembles that of Claudas, for both men are identified as 'verreter' who have

great ability as knights (Meleagant - I,641,7f.; Claudas - I,1,13ff.).⁹² Bandemagus is only too aware of his son's rash and arrogant behaviour and he does all he can to check his devious attacks on Lancelot while Lancelot is in Gorre to rescue the Queen and to free those subjects of Artus who are captive in Gorre. Treachery is abhorrent to Bandemagus, and rather than tolerate it in Meleagant, he would prefer to disinherit him (I,641,20ff.). In addition to their roles as fathers and their status as vassal kings, a further parallel is drawn between Claudas and Bandemagus. Both men lose their sons at the hands of Ban's kin. Although he is aware of his son's guilt towards Lancelot, Bandemagus none the less mourns Meleagant deeply (II,105,3ff.), and his grief is described in the same terms as Claudas' at Dorins' death (I,60,35ff.). However, the radical difference in nature between Claudas and Bandemagus becomes most evident in their diametrically opposed reactions to the death of their sons. Claudas, Lancelot's enemy, seeks revenge for the death of Dorins at the hands of Lyonel and Bohort (I,59,16ff.), while Bandemagus demonstrates the strength of his friendship for Lancelot in being able to forgive Lancelot the death of Meleagant (II,681,29ff.).⁹³

The involved story of Morderet's true relationship to Artus forms part of the background history of the romance. In the foreground of the narrative action the figure of Morderet contributes vividly to the pattern of contrasting fathers and sons. Morderet shares the designation of 'verreter' with Claudas and Meleagant (III,712,13). His treacherous nature is

delineated clearly in the brief portraits of Gawan and his brothers (II,131-32).⁹⁴ Despite his failings and his shortcomings in the Prose Lancelot, Artus is still regarded by others as a noble king, one of the greatest in the world (e.g. I,30,7ff.; I,486,22f.; III,608,13f.). However, he is eventually destroyed by his own son. Morderet is guilty of the most heinous treachery, for he betrays the trust Artus, his putative uncle and actual father, places in him. For the duration of his war against Lancelot, Artus appoints Morderet custodian of his lands and protector of Ginover. Morderet usurps Artus' lands, and in doing so he renews in the final stages of the Trilogy the theme with which it had commenced, when that other verreter Claudas had usurped the lands of Ban and Bohort. Morderet uses that noble quality of miltekeyt which Claudas had learnt to recognise in Artus (I,33,29f.), to his own treasonable ends. He wins the support of Artus' vassal lords through a great show of generosity (III,638,7ff.), much as Claudas had won support during the war in Flanders from those whose lords were rightfully Lancelot and his cousins (II,693,1ff.). However, like Claudas (II,691,15ff.), Morderet is sensitive to the wrongness of his cause and is uneasy about the outcome of a battle with Artus (III,704,12ff.). The text establishes another parallel between Morderet and Meleagant in addition to their common designation as 'verreter' - a parallel which furthermore gives them something in common with Lancelot. They both fall in love with Artus' Queen and desire her ardently (Meleagant - I,639,22ff., I,640,7f.; Morderet - III,638,13ff.). Though neither is successful in satisfying his desires, there is one

further parallel in the episodes, in that they both contrive to have her imprisoned for a while.

The above pairs of fathers and sons appear in discrete narrative episodes, but are linked together thematically within the structure of the Prose Lancelot by a number of common features in their portrayal. The most significant of these features is the recurrence of a sharp contrast between the nature of the father and that of his son. These contrasts offer an additional perspective on the relationship of Lancelot to his son Galaat. From an oblique angle they support and affirm the thesis of Galaat's purity and his spiritual independence.

CONCLUSION

The notably high incidence of paternal/filial relationships in the Prose Lancelot reflects the central importance which the prose romancer attached to Lancelot as the father of Galaat. The prose romancer broke with tradition when he made Galaat the Grail winner. Not only did he substitute Galaat for Perceval, but he also focused on the relationship of father and son, rather than maternal uncle and nephew as had been customary. This shift in focus reveals itself to have had far-reaching structural and thematic implications for the composition of the Prose Lancelot.

Through Lancelot and his son Galaat the prose romancer presented a progressive view of chivalry. The secular chivalry practised by the knights of the Arthurian world is understood to

be the rightful forerunner to the spiritual world of the Grail quest. The succession of these two worlds is expressed primarily through the paternal/filial relationship of Lancelot and Galaat, for Lancelot was the foremost knight in the Lancelot proper and Galaat achieves the quest for the Grail. The particular nature of the relationship between the secular Arthurian world and the world of the Grail is revealed through the typological dimension developed out of the genealogical link between Lancelot and Galaat, for the quest for the Grail is conceived as a history of salvation couched within the Christian view of history as leading to the redemption of mankind.

It is the typological aspect of their relationship which distinguishes Lancelot and Galaat sharply from other pairs of fathers and sons and which makes clear their central importance to the work. However, in many other respects there are similarities drawn between Lancelot and Galaat and other paternal/filial relationships. Through the use of juxtaposition, contrast, comparison, analogy and parallelism the prose romancer is able to explore and develop issues which are of fundamental significance to Lancelot and Galaat as father and son.

The prose romancer is at pains to define carefully his conception of Lancelot, the adulterous hero of the Lancelot proper, as the father of the pure and virgin Grail knight, Galaat. He explores the theme of adultery not only in the case of Lancelot and Ginover, but also through Claudas and Artus and a host of minor incidents. Through these other cases of adultery he is able, by implicit contrast, to clarify further the particular

nature of Lancelot's love for Ginover, giving emphasis to the positive aspects of it.

The extraordinary circumstances of Galaat's conception which are detailed so carefully are glossed further by a series of other illegitimate births. The underlying chastity of Lancelot's kin, despite the high incidence of illegitimate sons, is contrasted with Artus' amorous susceptibilities. This contrast is reinforced by the nature of their respective offspring, in particular of Galaat and Morderet. Where the pure and virgin Galaat achieves the quest for the Grail, Morderet, the treacherous usurper and would-be adulterer, brings about the final destruction of Artus' reign.

In his concern to stress that Galaat was the spiritual heir to his father's pre-eminence in the secular world, the prose romancer adopted a number of other diverse strategies to dissociate Galaat from Lancelot's sin of adultery. The theme of inheriting a father's sin is pursued to some extent in the figures of Artus, Lancelot, Claudas and Galahot. However, this theme is restricted to the first part of the Lancelot proper (i.e. Kluge, vol.I), and it has no relevance where Galaat is concerned. None the less, within the context of the thematic structure of the entire Prose Lancelot Galaat's immunity to the burden of Lancelot's sin may be interpreted as a further means of highlighting his exceptional nature and status. Running parallel to, but extending far beyond, the theme of the visitation of the father's sins on the children is the theme of the autonomy of the individual. The interaction of hereditary influence and self-

determination is explored at some length within the experience of Lancelot's kin. In the Gral-Queste the thesis of the inheritance of a father's sins is taken up again, but only to be flatly denied. In this romance, as in the Lancelot proper, noble lineage is seen as a positive factor, but the hermits of the Gral-Queste stress that in the final analysis the individual must accept the responsibility for his own success and salvation. In the course of the Trilogy the freedom of the individual to develop his own honour and virtue is commented on by a series of paternal/filial relationships (Claudas - Dorins, Claudin; Bandemagus - Meleagant; Artus - Morderet), where in each case father and son are diametrically opposed in nature and temperament.

The pairs of fathers and sons listed at the beginning of this chapter, although important in their own right within the action of the narrative, all contribute to a clarification and modification of the issues raised by the complex and problematic concept of Lancelot, the adulterous lover of Ginover, as the father of the virgin and pure Grail winner, Galaat. The approaches which are adopted to define the relationship of Lancelot and Galaat are not always readily compatible in detail (e.g. the theme of the inheritance of sin and that of self-determination). This is most probably the result of the pluralistic authorship of the Prose Lancelot. However, in considering the structure of the text as we have it, these different approaches may be interpreted as independent facets of the same ultimate artistic intention, i.e. to establish Galaat as the heir to all that is good in Lancelot, to dissociate him

from Lancelot's sin and to emphasise the individual's responsibility for his personal success and salvation. The high incidence of paternal/filial relationships, then, in the Prose Lancelot contributes to the structural and thematic coherence of the Trilogy, reflecting and modifying as they do those issues which are central to the particular nature of Lancelot's relationship with Galaat.

Notes to Chapter Two

The central argument of this chapter was presented as a paper, 'Väter und Söhne im Prosa-Lancelot', at the conference devoted to the MHG Prose Lancelot held by the Wolfram von Eschenbach-Gesellschaft at Schweinfurt in September 1984. The paper will be published in volume 9 of Wolfram-Studien.

1. There is some confusion over the identity of Galehodin in the MHG text. He is referred to both as a son (II,275,1ff; II,575,9) and as a nephew and godson (I,511,15f.) of Galahot. In Lancelot, Roman en prose du XIIIe siècle, edited by A. Micha, 9 vols (Paris, 1978-83), Galehodin is Galehaut's nephew and godson (I,82,11; IV,185,6f.; V,188,5ff.), although in the apparatus to these passages Micha notes that some OF manuscripts identify Galehodin as Galehaut's son.
2. J. Frappier, 'Plaidoyer pour l'"Architechte", contre une opinion d'Albert Pauphilet sur le Lancelot en prose', RPh, 8 (1954), 27-33 (p. 32). For opinions on the authorship of the Prose Lancelot see Ch. 1, p. 43ff.
3. J. Frappier, 'Le Cycle de la Vulgate (Lancelot en Prose et Lancelot-Graal)', GRLMA, IV/1 (Heidelberg, 1978, pp. 536-89 (pp. 538-39)).
4. Elspeth Kennedy, 'The scribe as editor', in Mélanges de Langue et de Littérature du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance offerts à Jean Frappier, 2 vols (Geneva, 1970), I, pp. 523-31 (p. 527).
5. Lancelot do Lac. The Non-Cyclic Old French Prose Romance, edited by E. Kennedy, 2 vols (Oxford, 1980), I, 33, 8ff.
6. Kennedy, Lancelot do Lac, II, n. 33.8-15. On the relationship of the non-cyclic Prose Lancelot to the cyclic version see my introductory chapter.

7. Micha, Lancelot en prose, gives in an appendix to VII, 462-76 the relevant passage as it occurs in all the extant OF manuscripts. On his reasons for selecting Galaad as the original reading see his article 'La tradition manuscrite du Lancelot en prose', R, 85(1964), 292-317(pp. 297-98).
8. On the relationship of the MHG text to the OF manuscripts with regard to this passage see Kluge I, LIII, n.6; LVIf.; LXf. The discrepancy which occurs in the OF manuscripts with regard to the identity of the Grail winner has, of course, been an important factor in the debate about the authorship of the Prose Lancelot. It was one of the details which F. Lot found most difficult to reconcile with his theory of sole authorship. See F. Lot, Etude sur le Lancelot en Prose, second edition (Paris, 1954), Ch.V, pp. 108-25.
9. For example in Wolfram von Eschenbach, Parzival, edited by K. Lachmann and E. Hartl, sixth edition (Berlin 1926, reprinted 1965), 416,6; 649,13; 727,10.
10. Clair H. Bell, The Sister's Son in the Medieval Epic. A Study of the Survival of Matriliney, Publications in Modern Philosophy, 10, No. 2 (University of California, 1922), p. 67; W.O. Farnsworth, Uncle and Nephew in the Old French Chansons de Geste: A Study in the Survival of Matriarchy (New York, 1913; reprinted 1966).
11. Farnsworth, Uncle and Nephew, p. 230; Bell, The Sister's Son, p. 165.
12. Farnsworth, Uncle and Nephew, pp. 239-40; Bell, The Sister's Son, p. 173.
13. M. Bloch, Feudal Society, translated by L.A. Manyon, 2 vols, second edition (London, 1975), I, p. 137.
14. G. Duby, Medieval Marriage, translated by E. Forster (Baltimore, 1978), p. 6.
15. G.D. West, An Index of Proper Names in French Arthurian Verse Romances 1150-1300 (Toronto, 1969), comments with

regard to Perceval's kin in the various continuations of Chrétien's Conte du Graal: 'There is much confusion over his (Perceval's) relatives, and it is not consistently clear whether he belongs to the "Grail family" through his father or his mother' (pp. 130-31).

16. See my introductory chapter, p. 7f. Myrrha Lot-Borodine considers the development in the portrayal of the Grail knight in Chrétien de Troyes' Conte du Graal and its Continuations, Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival, Robert de Boron's trilogy, the Queste del Saint Graal and Perlesvaus in: 'Les deux conquérants du Graal' in Trois essais sur le Roman de Lancelot du Lac et la Quête du Saint Graal (Paris, 1919), pp. 65-121, also in R, 47 (1921), 41-97.
17. The Prose Lancelot romancer radically altered Ulrich von Zatzikhoven's portrayal of the tyrannical King Pant. See my introductory chapter, p. 3ff.
18. Celydoine is not named as such in the MHG text, but see the apparatus to III, 184, 7. For the significance of the choice of King Mordrain as Galaad's ancestor see Pauline Matarasso, The Redemption of Chivalry. A Study of the Queste del Saint Graal (Geneva, 1979), pp. 23-26.
19. G. Duby, The Chivalrous Society, translated by C. Postan (London, 1977), p. 74; p. 75.
20. Duby, The Chivalrous Society, p. 151 and Duby, Medieval Marriage, ch. III, 'A Noble House: The Counts of Guines', pp. 83-110.
21. Duby, The Chivalrous Society, p. 74.
22. M. Keen, Chivalry, (New Haven, Connecticut/London, 1984), p. 143.
23. Duby, The Chivalrous Society, p. 152.
24. Nancy Vine, 'Permutations in Genealogy: A Study of Kinship Structure in Old French Hagiography, "Chansons de Geste" and Romance' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of

Princeton, 1981), (DAI, 442 (1982), p. 1143), p. 180. Vine focuses upon the various ways in which kinship relations are systematized within a given corpus of OF texts (c. 1050-1225). She discusses how, although lineage is conceptualised somewhat differently in hagiography, the chansons de geste, the chronicles and romance, all employ lineage as a metaphor through which a particular narrative and historical viewpoint may be expressed.

25. There is some inconsistency in the details of the portrayal of Lancelot's descent from David in the Prose Lancelot. See J.D. Bruce, 'The Composition of the Old French Prose Lancelot', RR, 9 (1918), 241-68 (pp. 250-55); F. Lot, Etude sur le Lancelot en prose, second edition (Paris, 1954), pp. 218-20; J. Frappier, Etude sur la Mort Le Roi Artu, roman du XIIIe siècle, dernière partie du Lancelot en prose, second revised edition (Paris/Geneva, 1961), pp. 450-55.
26. A. Pauphilet, Etudes sur la Queste del Saint Graal, attribuée à Gautier Map (Paris, 1921; reprinted Paris, 1968), p. 145.
27. For an account of how the Queste del Saint Graal romancer adapted the legend of the Cross see Pauphilet, Etudes Queste, pp. 144-56.
28. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Micropaedia, Vol.10, 15th edition (London, 1983), s.v. 'typological interpretation, biblical', p. 221.
29. F. Ohly, Sage und Legende in der Kaiserchronik. Untersuchungen über Quellen und Aufbau der Dichtung, Forschungen zur deutschen Sprache und Dichtung, 10 (Münster, 1940), p. 26.
30. W. Schröder, 'Zum Typologie-Begriff und Typologie-Verständnis in der mediävistischen Literaturwissenschaft', in The Epic in Medieval Society: Aesthetic and Moral Values, edited by H. Scholler (Tübingen, 1977), pp. 64-85. Following the findings of specialist studies into the use of typology in medieval literature, Schröder has attempted to elicit those elements which must be present if the term typological is to

be used in a way that corresponds to medieval usage: "Auch die Übertragung einer exegetischen Methode per analogiam - die für die typologische im Mittelalter weder theoretisch gerechtfertigt noch praktisch geübt worden zu sein scheint - müsste wenigstens den formalen Bedingungen ihrer ursprünglichen Konzeption genügen! Sie müsste in der Lage sein, solche historischen oder für historisch gehaltenen Fakten steigernd aufeinander zu beziehen, die einem einheitlichen, teleologisch verstandenen Geschichtsablauf angehören, und sie müsste den beabsichtigten Bezug in jedem Falle explizit machen" (p. 82).

31. J. Frappier, 'The Vulgate Cycle', in ALMA, pp. 295-318 (p. 302); A. Pauphilet, 'Sur la composition du Lancelot-Graal' in Le Legs du Moyen Age (Melun, 1950), pp. 212-17 (p. 216). E. Köhler, Ideal und Wirklichkeit in der höfischen Epik. Studien zur Form der frühen Artus- und Graldichtung (Tübingen, 1956), p. 183ff.; U. Ruberg, 'Die Suche im Prosa-Lancelot', ZfdA, 92 (1963), 122-57 (pp. 152-56); H. Fromm, 'Lancelot und die Einsiedler' in Geistliche Denkformen in der Literatur des Mittelalters, edited by K. Grubmüller, R. Schmidt-Wiegand, K. Speckenbach (Munich, 1984), pp. 155-64 (p. 159). For an appraisal of the extent to which the Prose Lancelot may be analysed typologically see U. Ruberg, review of R. Voss, Der Prosa-Lancelot. Eine strukturanalytische und strukturvergleichende Studie auf der Grundlage des deutschen Textes, AfdA, 83 (1972), 172-79.
32. See Matarasso, Redemption of Chivalry, p. 26 and Grace Savage, 'Narrative Technique in the Queste del Saint Graal', (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Princeton, 1973), (DAI, A34 (1974) p. 5203), p. 55.
33. Matarasso, Redemption of Chivalry, p. 92. See also R. Tuve, Allegorical Imagery: some mediaeval books and their posterity (Princeton, 1966), pp. 430-31 and H.-H. Steinhoff, 'Artusritter und Gralsheld: Zur Bewertung des höfischen

Rittertums im Prosa-Lancelot' in The Epic in Medieval Society (see n. 22), pp. 271-89 (p. 278). On the concept of Galaat as a Christ-like figure in a typological context K. Ruh, 'Der Gralsheld in der Queste del Saint Graal' in Wolfram-Studien,¹(Berlin, 1970), pp. 240-63, comments: 'Galaad-messianischer Christus, Parzivals Schwester-Maria mediatrix sind ausserzeitliche typologische Parallelen, heuristische Vorstellungsmodelle zur Spiritualisierung der Gralslegende' (p. 256). Ruh has discerned in the Gral-Queste the influence of the historical philosophy of Joachim of Flore through Robert de Boron, 'Joachitische Spiritualität im Werke Roberts von Boron', in Typologia Litterarum, Festschrift für Max Wehrli (Zurich, 1969), pp. 167-96 and 'Gralsheld', pp. 260-63. Joachim of Flore (1132-1202) developed a trinitarian philosophy of history which understood the history of salvation to be a continuing self-revelation of the divine Trinity in 3 stages: (i) the time (status) of the Father (ii) the time of the son (iii) the time of the Holy Spirit. In the context of this historical philosophy Ruh sees Galaat as ushering in this third status, that of the Holy Spirit. Ruh's argument found support amongst Germanists, e.g. H. Fromm, 'Zur Karrenritter-Episode im Prosa-Lancelot. Struktur und Geschichte', in Festschrift für Kurt Ruh zum 65. Geburtstag, edited by D. Huschenbett, K. Matzel, G. Steer, N. Wagner (Tübingen, 1979), pp. 69-97 (pp. 89-90), but recently K. Speckenbach, 'Endzeiterwartung im 'Lancelot-Gral-Zyklus'. Zur Problematik des Joachitschen Einflusses auf den Prosaroman', in Geistliche Denkformen in der Literatur des Mittelalters, (see n. 23), pp. 210-25 has focused sharply on the improbability of Joachim's thought having penetrated France by the first quarter of the thirteenth century (pp. 214-15). See also Matarasso, Redemption of Chivalry, p. 94.

34. Steinhoff, 'Artusritter und Gralsheld', p. 281. P. Utz, 'Lancelot und Parzival. Zur Klosterepisode im 'Karrenritter' des mhd. Prosa-Lancelot', Beitr., 101 (1979), 369-84, comments

similarly: 'Er (Lancelot), der - wie häufig betont wird - am St. Johannistag zum Ritter geschlagen worden ist (I,124,29; I,154,14; I,169,24; I,178,31), ist eine Johannes-, eine Vorläuferfigur' (p. 374).

35. G. Savage, 'Father and Son in the Queste del Saint Graal', RPh, 31 (1977/78), 1-16, comments: 'The romance further establishes, by its emphasis on paternity, that this radically new Christian heroism, which implies the destruction of the conventional type celebrated at Arthur's court, was definitely born of the old heroism embodied in Lancelot (p. 15).
36. Matarasso, Redemption of Chivalry, pp. 39-41. On the use of incognito in combat in the Prose Lancelot see Ch. 3, p. 208ff.
37. For a discussion of this trait of Lancelot's personality see Ch. 3, p. 160ff.
38. Pauphilet, Etudes Queste, p. 45.
39. See E. Otlewski, 'The Story of the Parents in Medieval Romance: A Study of Medieval Narrative Unity', (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1971), (DAI, A32 (1972), p. 4574).
40. Ruh, 'Gralsheld', p. 256. See also Matarasso, Redemption of Chivalry, pp. 36-37.
41. E. Soudek, 'The Cart-Episode: Evolution of an Arthurian Incident from Chrétien's Le Chevalier de la Charrette, through the Old French Prose Lancelot, the Middle High German Prose Lancelot to Malory's Morte Darthur' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1969), (DAI, A31 (1970/71), pp. 1240-41) has noted how the MHG romancer strove through the addition of details to heighten the religious tone already present in the emphasis which the OF romance had given to the portrayal of Lancelot as the redeemer of those held captive in Gorre (p. 3; p. 157). See my introductory chapter, pp. 25-26.
42. M. Lot-Borodine, Trois Essais, 'Avant-Propos', p. 3.

43. For a thorough discussion of the factors which lead to the downfall of Artus see A. Zuurdeeg, 'Structure and Meaning in La Mort le Roi Artu' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1973), (DAI, A34 (1974), pp. 6006-7).
44. There is a degree of confusion over the names of Guerehes and Gaheries in the MHG text. At this point (I,461,32) the MHG has 'Keheriet', while the OF has 'Guerrehes' (Kennedy, I,546,5; Micha, VIII,442,34). Kluge, though he retains 'Keheriet' notes the discrepancy in the apparatus to I,461,32. My analysis of the amorous nature of Gawan's brothers in chapter three (p.183ff.) would suggest that the incident would be far more in keeping with Guerehes' behaviour than with Gaheries'.
45. Elspeth Kennedy, 'Social and political ideas in the Prose Lancelot', Med.Aev., 26 (1957), 90-106 (p. 93).
46. Cynthia Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry in the Prose Lancelot' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Harvard, 1970), (DAI, A32 (1971), p. 1505), p. 63.
47. Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry', p. 73.
48. Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry', p. 74.
49. Lot, Etude Lancelot, coined this phrase (p. 76).
50. Frappier, Etude Mort Artu, p. 108. Frappier is here taking issue with Lot's assertion that the double esprit was evident throughout the Prose Lancelot. See Ch. 1, p. 45.
51. Myrrha Lot-Borodine, 'Tristan et Lancelot', in Medieval Studies in Memory of Gertrude Schoepperle Loomis (Paris/New York, 1927), pp. 21-47 (p. 44). D. Brewer, 'The Presentation of the Character of Lancelot: Chrétien to Malory', in Arthurian Literature, III, edited by R. Barber (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 26-52, makes the same point (pp. 34-35).
52. It is stated at one point in the text that Galehodin is 'konig Gallahats sun von den Frömden Innseeln, den er gewann mit Balyen, des konigs dochter von Norgales' (II,275,1f.). This

is the only reference in the Prose Lancelot to a relationship between Galahot and the King of Norgales' daughter. As there is no mention of a marriage, it would seem that Galehodin is Galahot's illegitimate son. However, Galehodin's appearances are too infrequent and too insignificant to make any real contribution to the theme of bastardy in the Prose Lancelot. See also n. 1.

53. J.N. Carman, A Study of the Pseudo-Map Cycle of Arthurian Romance (Kansas, 1973), pp. 93-94, n. 2. On Walter Map as the ostensible author of the Prose Lancelot, see Ch. 1, p.43f.
54. Duby, Medieval Marriage, p. 96.
55. G. Duby, The Knight, the Lady and the Priest, translated by B. Bray (New York, 1983), pp. 262-63. Although bastards were 'just as noble as other offspring' they were disadvantaged in certain respects, most notably the law did not allow them to inherit. The Church excluded bastards from office, although special dispensations could be made.
56. Duby, The Knight, the Lady and the Priest, p. 222.
57. I have disregarded Claudas' bastard son Claudin in what follows, as the circumstances of his birth are not related and thus he does not contribute to the pattern I trace.
58. The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances, edited by H.O. Sommer, 7 vols. (Washington, 1908-16), II, L'Estoire de Merlin (1908), pp. 402-06.
59. The rendering of the OF name Brangoires is more inconsistent than most in the MHG. He is variously referred to as Brandemagus, Brandagor, Bandemagus.
60. That Bohort is innocent is quite clear, but the prose romancer gives us no indication of how we are to understand the 'innocence' of King Brandemagus' daughter.
61. Our impression of the purity and innocence of King Pelles' daughter's intentions is disturbed when she dupes Lancelot a second time (II,778,15-781,14). For an interpretation of this awkward detail see Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry', p. 43.

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62. On this episode Frappier, GRLMA, IV/1, comments: 'A coup sûr, la situation est équivoqué et l'invention est gauche; mais cet écueil était difficile à éviter' (p. 550).
63. Ruh, 'Gralsheld', p. 248. Lot, Etude Lancelot, comments: 'Lancelot reste toujours à ses yeux le premier dans l'ordre naturel, tout comme Galaad est le premier dans l'ordre mystique' (p. 425).
64. See Ch. 3, p. 184ff.
65. The circumstances of this union are explained more fully in the Estoire de Merlin, p. 124.
66. Ulrich von Zatzikhoven, Lanzelet, edited by K.A. Hahn (Frankfurt, 1845; reprinted with a postscript and bibliography by F. Norman, Berlin, 1965), ll.6888-89. On the figure of Arthur's son Lohos see G. Huet, 'Deux Personnages Arturiens', R, 43 (1914), 96-102 (p. 100). The Prose Lancelot romancer made a further alteration in the kinship of his main protagonists. In Ulrich's romance Lanzelet is a maternal nephew of Artus (ll.4958-59; ll.5573-75; l.8462; l.8801). However, in the Prose Lancelot there is no mention of this kinship tie, presumably because the prose romancer did not wish to complicate further those moral issues which surround Lancelot's adultery with the Queen.
67. See Ch. 4, p. 236ff.
68. See Ch. 3, pp. 145-47.
69. These thumbnail sketches fall in the lacuna of the MHG P manuscript. See Micha, II,408,4-411,23.
70. On the hermits of the Gral-Queste Fromm, 'Lancelot und die Einsiedler', comments: 'Die Grundlage aller Einsiedlergespräche ist das Prädestinationswissen des Eremiten. Er kennt den Plan und das Ziel und hat von hier aus Einsicht in den Status seines Partners' (p. 158).
71. Estoire de Merlin, p. 129.
72. In this state of ignorance Frappier, Etude Mort Artu, sees

an echo of the Oedipus legend (p. 203f.).

73. J.D. Bruce, 'Mordred's Incestuous Birth', in Medieval Studies in Memory of Gertrude Schoepperle-Loomis (New York, 1927), pp. 197-208 (p. 208). See also H. Briel and M. Herrmann, King Arthur's Knights and the Myths of the Round Table. A New Approach to the French Lancelot en prose (Paris, 1972), p. 131; Frappier, Etude Mort Artu, p. 32f.
74. Frappier, 'Vulgate Cycle', p. 310.
75. This reference is to the legend of how Uther, in the shape of the Duke of Tintagel, engendered Arthur with the Duke's wife, Ygerne. After the death of the Duke of Tintagel in battle, Uther married Ygerne. This event is retold in the Estoire de Merlin, edited by H.O. Sommer (Washington, 1908), p. 58ff.
76. On the effect of this inherited sin on Artus' marriage see P.W. Krawutschke, 'Liebe, Ehe and Familie im deutschen Prosa-Lancelot I' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1976), (DAI, A37 (1976), pp. 1537-38), pp. 155-58.
77. See U. Ruberg, Raum und Zeit im Prosa-Lancelot, Medium Aevum, Philologische Studien, 9 (Munich, 1965), p. 127: 'Die Ausnahmestellung Galaads ist im genealogischen Denken dadurch motiviert, dass die Sünde der Vätergenerationen in ihm wirkungslos verstummen muss vor der Übermacht der göttlichen Erwählung, die sich in der einzigartigen genealogischen Konstellation ausspricht.'
78. e.g. Frappier, Etude Mort Artu, p. 449. This argument is further strengthened by the fact that the account given in the Gral-Queste of Ban's death (III,185,11ff.) is at variance with that given in the Lancelot proper (I,13,17ff.).
79. Fromm, 'Lancelot und die Einsiedler', p. 159.
80. Keen, Chivalry, p. 156.
81. P.M. Matarasso comments: 'Initially Bors' companion appears to be a trifle muddled, since the parable of the tree and its

- fruits refers to the works in the soul by grace and not to heredity (cf. Matt, 17,7)', in The Quest for the Holy Grail, translated by P.M. Matarasso (London, 1969), p. 178, n. 48.
82. See Madeleine Blaess, 'Predestination in some Thirteenth Century Prose Romances', in Currents of Thought in French Literature in Memory of G.T. Clapton, edited by T.V. Benn, G.W. Ireland, J.C. Ireson, W. Rothwell, S. Ullman (Oxford, 1965), pp. 3-19.
 83. It is, of course, a common trait in the portrayal of romance heroes (e.g. Tristan and Perceval) that they are initially ignorant of their true identity and must therefore establish themselves through their own efforts. Their success in winning honour for themselves is understood as a confirmation of their noble birth. See Ch. 3, pp. 159-62.
 84. Despite his protestations Lancelot never assumes the kingship of his own lands, for he will have no ties that bind him feudally to Artus (III,625,3ff.). See chapter four for a closer examination of Lancelot's relationship with Artus.
 85. The MHG text attributes this speech to Bohort, although in the OF it comes from the hermit (La Queste del Saint Graal, roman du XIIIe siècle, edited by A. Pauphilet (Paris, 1923), p. 165,13ff.). The discrepancy may be no more than a scribal error in the MHG, but it is tempting to think that the MHG romancer wished to reinforce the theme of self-determination as expressed by Lancelot and his kin. For a discussion of the theological ambiguities surrounding the issue of the interaction of grace and free will see Pauphilet, Etudes Queste, p. 32ff., and E. Gilson, 'La mystique de la grâce dans la Queste del Saint Graal', R, 51 (1925), 321-47 (p. 326ff.).
 86. Pauphilet, Etudes Queste, p. 31.
 87. On the portrayal of Claudas as a reflection of contemporary kings see J.N. Carman, Pseudo-Map Cycle, pp. 27-33.
 88. When Claudas makes a secret visit to Artus' court, he puts

- Patrices, his uncle, in charge of his lands, because he fears Dorins' generosity (I,27,36f.). On his return he learns from Patrices: 'das sin sun Dorins viel unfug hett gethan in dem lande: dorff gebrochen, raub genommen, lút getötet und mangeln man dotgewundet' (I,33,24f.). Dorins' wild behaviour is difficult to reconcile with the otherwise complimentary portrait of him. The interpretation of this passage is made more difficult by the fact that Claudas does not respond at all to what Patrices tells him. As Carman, Pseudo-Map Cycle (p. 33, n. 4) comments, it would seem that the text is defective at this point.
89. For a discussion of the theme of miltekeyt in the Prose Lancelot see Ch. 4, p.241ff.
 90. Early in the Lancelot proper it is stated that Claudas has only one son (I,29,9), but during the war in Flanders Claudin is introduced (I,715,28ff.). M. Stoehr, 'The War in Flanders: Themes and Structure of an Episode in the "Prosa-Lancelot"' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1978) (DAI, A39 (1978), p. 3569) comments on the emphasis given to the tie of kinship in the episode of the war in Flanders and notes how new relations are introduced into the text: 'Claudas is given a new son to replace the one Lyonel killed years before, and a flock of nephews almost as large as Artus' (p. 38).
 91. Lot, Etude Lancelot, p. 78 and p. 86, n. 4. H.-G. Jantzen, 'Untersuchungen zur Entstehung des altfranzösischen Prosaromans' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Heidelberg, 1966) suggests a more arbitrary explanation for Claudin's appearance at the feast in Corbenic: 'Viel näher liegt die Annahme, dass dieser unpassende Gast von einem Überarbeiter zum Teilnehmer am Gralswunder befördert wurde, weil drei der Ritter aus Gallien stammen, und in Gallien herrschte, nach dem "Agravain", ja Claudas.' (p. 170, n. 4).
 92. The description of the nature of Claudas' marshal reflects that of Claudas: 'Und der marschalk, der eyn gut ritter und

sicher was, enhet er nit an im ein riss von verretery
gehabt als syn herre, ... ' (III,690,6ff.).

93. This episode has a further function in that it foreshadows and contrasts with Gawan's inability to forgive Lancelot's unwitting killing of his brother Gaheries in the Tod des König Artus. See Ch. 4,
94. See n. 69.

CHAPTER THREE

BROTHERS AND COUSINS

There is general agreement amongst scholars of literature that 'character' is often an inappropriate term to apply to the dramatis personae of the courtly romances, for it suggests most readily methods of portrayal by novelists and dramatists of a post-Medieval age. 'Figure' is frequently used as a more suitable expression.¹ Whether to designate a protagonist in a work of fiction as 'figure' or 'character' is not always a simple decision, but a broad distinction may be made by saying that a 'figure' becomes a 'character' when he begins to draw attention to himself as a personality, rather than for his part in the unfolding action or his contribution to the development of a theme.² Many of the figures who people the world of the Prose Lancelot have a clearly defined and multi-faceted identity, but they also all share, to a greater or lesser extent, in a corporate identity and their actions in the narrative are subordinate to a greater pattern of meaning which is revealed as the Trilogy progresses. In the following chapter I shall first explore the extent to which the brothers and cousins of Lancelot and Gawan have a corporate identity as members of either of the house of Ban or the house of Artus and then I shall examine how the patterning of these lateral relationships contributes to the structural and thematic coherence of the Prose Lancelot trilogy.

THE ORGANISING PRINCIPLE OF KINSHIP

The grouping of kin round Lancelot and Gawan

On a first reading the Prose Lancelot bewilders us with its multiplicity of knights and their adventures. However, a closer examination of the text soon reveals that, although there is a sense of a large number of knights participating in the adventures of the Kingdom of Logres, the number who really advance the action and whose experiences are related fully is relatively restricted. The majority of knights whose presence is constant in the work belong to one of two kin groups, either to the house of King Ban or to that of King Artus. Throughout the Trilogy Lancelot, the son of King Ban, and Gawan, the nephew of King Artus, are the leading protagonists around whom the knights of their respective houses are grouped. Gawan has three brothers, Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries. These three brothers round Gawan are balanced by a similar constellation round Lancelot, for Lancelot has close and loyal companions in his two cousins, Lyonel and Bohort, and his half-brother Hestor.

In addition to his three full brothers Gawan also has a half-brother, Morderet, who is the result of Artus' incestuous union with Gawan's mother, King Lot's wife.³ Even though for almost the entire length of the Lancelot proper Morderet is identified, albeit mistakenly, by other figures in the romance and by the narrator himself as a full brother of Gawan, I have disregarded him in what follows, for an analysis of the text reveals that Morderet's role in the narrative is unlike that of

his half-brothers. In the Lancelot proper Morderet is present amongst the company at Artus' court, but he has virtually no share in the individual chivalric adventures of the knight errant. This is partially explained by his youth. In the first half of the Lancelot proper (Kluge's volume I) Morderet is referred to as a knappe (e.g. I,354,33ff.) and, one, therefore, not yet eligible for chivalric adventures. We are not told when Morderet is knighted, but in the second part of the Lancelot proper (Kluge's volume II) he is referred to as a knight. However, in the thumbnail sketches of the salient characteristics and physical features which the narrator gives of Gawan and his brothers, attention is drawn to Morderet's youth and his consequent lack of experience in chivalric adventure (II,131,26f.).⁴ None the less, even if we take Morderet's youth into consideration, it is striking that Morderet receives no mention at all in that section of the Lancelot proper which follows the thumbnail sketches, where the adventures of Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries are related consecutively. In his study of the motif of Morderet's incestuous birth, James Bruce came to the conclusion that the revelation of Morderet's true identity to Lancelot in the Lancelot proper (II,601,5ff.) was an interpolation by the later romancer of the Mort Artu.⁵ This may well be so, but within the text as we have it the paucity of chivalric adventures experienced by Morderet already sets him apart from his brothers, and this difference prepares us in part for the disclosure of Morderet's real parentage towards the end of the Lancelot proper. The emphasis on Morderet's function in the patterning of relationships does not fall on his identity as Gawan's half-brother, but rather on the

fact that he is Artus' bastard son.⁶

The difference in portrayal between Morderet and his brothers, Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries, may well have grown out of the difference in their literary histories. Morderet has a prominent role to play in Wace's chronicle, the Roman de Brut, based on Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia regum Britanniae. In this text he is identified as a nephew of Arthur, who commits treason by leading a rebellion against his uncle. As his parents are not specified, we cannot know if he is a brother of Gawain. Morderet belongs initially, then, to the pseudo-historical world of the chronicles, where feudal relations are given greater prominence than in the more refined atmosphere of the verse romances, where codes of chivalry inspired by love are explored with regard to their ethical and social implications. Indeed, the only extant verse romance Morderet appears in prior to the Prose Lancelot is the Second Continuation of Chrétien de Troyes' Conte du Graal and in this text he is merely mentioned a few times in passing. Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries, on the other hand, do not appear in the chronicles of Geoffrey and Wace, but occur fairly frequently in a number of Old French verse romances composed prior to the Prose Lancelot, namely in Chrétien de Troyes' Erec, his Conte du Graal and the First and Second Continuation of it, in Raoul de Houdenc's Meraugis de Portlesgues and his La Vengeance Raguidel.⁷ Morderet becomes established as a full brother of Gawan in the Didot-Perceval of the Robert de Boron trilogy, i.e. the first text to draw on both the chronicle and the verse romance tradition.⁸ This difference in background

was probably an important factor in the Prose Lancelot romancer's decision to isolate Morderet in his portrayal of Gawan's brothers.

Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries do not have prominent roles to play in those verse romances mentioned above, with the notable exception of Guerehes in the First Continuation. In this text Guerehes' adventures involving the boat drawn by a swan occupy, according to William Roach's structural analysis of the work, one of the six sections into which the narrative falls.⁹ In contrast to these earlier verse romances and the Didot-Perceval we find that all three brothers have a role to play in the Lancelot proper which becomes increasingly significant as the narrative unfolds, and in the Tod des König Artus they have a decisive part to play in the sequence of events which culminates in the destruction of the Round Table and the downfall of King Artus.

As the hero knight's relatives, Lyonel, Bohort and Hestor have an even greater part to play in the Prose Lancelot than Gawan's brothers. However, unlike Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries, Lancelot's cousins and half-brother do not appear amongst the knights of those Old French verse romances which are generally assumed to have been written before the Prose Lancelot, not even within those texts which are a part of the Lancelot tradition itself. Nor is any reference made to them in Robert de Boron's Prose Merlin or in the Didot-Perceval.¹⁰ Their earliest occurrence in a verse romance is in the third Continuation of Chrétien's Conte du Graal, the one written by Manessier. There are a number of episodes and figures common to the Continuation

Manessier and the Prose Lancelot, but the precise relationship between the two texts remains unclear. Although it is generally assumed that Manessier drew on the Prose Lancelot, Jean Marx has put forward an argument for considering whether there might have been a common source, no longer extant, from which both texts were derived.¹¹ In the absence of the alleged common source Marx's argument must remain speculative. The Continuation Manessier is generally dated at about 1225, i.e. towards the end of that period, 1215-30, usually ascribed to the composition of the Prose Lancelot.¹² If this dating is accurate, it is most probable that Manessier drew on the Prose Lancelot. If this supposition is correct, then the balancing of Gawan's siblings by Lancelot's cousins and half-brother must have been an integral part of the original structural conception of the Prose Lancelot. I do not intend to try and prove this through a textual comparison of the Continuation Manessier and the Prose Lancelot, but rather instead to demonstrate through an analysis of the Prose Lancelot text itself how fundamental the comparison and contrast between Gawan's and Lancelot's kin is to the thematic structure of the Prose Lancelot.

Identity and reputation

As I have established in my introductory chapter, the Prose Lancelot romancer was comprehensive in his use of that wealth of literature which was concerned with the figures of King Arthur and Lancelot. The narrative focus of the three main literary genres he drew upon differed markedly. Where the verse romances centred on the adventures and development of an individual hero

knight, the pseudo-historical chronicles related the epic history of the Britons under the reign of King Arthur and the Grail legend related the individual exploits of various knights within a collective quest of universal significance. The fusing of these three sources in one work and the consequent interweaving of many diverse themes resulted in the depiction of a multi-layered society, which is more complex than that of any one of its constituent elements. This complexity is reflected in the portrayal of the main protagonists.

In the Arthurian romances the delineation of the leading knights rests on the following principles:

1) The knight's identity is defined in terms of three criteria - his kin group, his feudal rank and his function as a knight errant.

2) The knight creates his reputation by his actions and his responses to the situations he finds himself in.

While the verse romancers concentrated primarily on how a knight acquitted himself as a knight errant, the Prose Lancelot romancer allowed the issues of kinship and feudal rank to have a greater bearing on the course of the narrative. In addition to the methods of portrayal listed above, the Prose Lancelot romancer has borrowed, absorbed and modified identity traits which had been established for certain knights in earlier Arthurian texts. The extent to which he has done this cannot be fully assessed, of course, because of the incomplete survival of medieval literature, both written and oral.

Since the beginnings of Arthurian literature, both in the chronicle tradition of Geoffrey of Monmouth and in the verse romances developed and inspired by Chrétien de Troyes, Gawain was an indispensable figure at Arthur's court. In the course of time there was an accretion of certain features which became traditionally associated with his person. These constitute what Christoph Cormeau has called his 'präformierter Charakter'.¹³ Thus, for example, Gawain was traditionally known as King Arthur's favourite nephew and loyal vassal and as a paragon of chivalry among the knights of the Round Table.¹⁴

In the verse romances of those working within the patterns established by Chrétien, Gawain in general exemplifies the high standard of courtliness to be found at Arthur's court. Thus, Hartmann von Aue in his adaptation of Chrétien's romance about the knight Erec tells us that Gawan manifests all the virtues expected of a knight:

er was getriuwe
und milte âne riuwe,
staete unde wol gezogen,
sîniu wort unbetrogen,
starc schoene und manhaft.
an im was aller tugende kraft.
mit schoenen zûhten was er vrô.
der Wunsch hete in gemeistert so,
als wirz mit wârheit haben vernomen,
daz nie man sô vollekomen
ans kûnec Artûses hof bekam. (2734-44) (15)

One of Gawain's main roles in these classical Arthurian romances is to function as a yardstick according to which the prowess and progress of other knights, in particular the hero knight, towards chivalric excellence may be measured. An incident in Hartmann's Iwein, an adaptation of Chrétien's Yvain, will demonstrate this:

Gawan is the acknowledged champion of justice at Arthur's court, and so when an inheritance dispute arises between two sisters on the death of their father, the grâve von dem Swarzen dorne, the elder sister rushes to Arthur's court to claim Gawan as her defender. The younger sister is obliged to find another champion and so she searches for the 'knight with the lion', Iwein, who has won a great reputation through his deeds. In the context of the entire romance Iwein's incognito combat with Gawan on behalf of the younger sister of the 'grâve von dem Swarzen dorne' is the last in a series of adventures in which Iwein restores his good name after having been publicly disgraced for neglecting his lady, Laudine. That Iwein and Gawan are so evenly matched in combat demonstrates that Iwein has regained his êre, his honour and reputation, and has become fully the equal of Gawan.¹⁶

In his romance about the Grail knight Perceval Chrétien introduced a more spiritual perspective into the world of Arthurian chivalric society, and in doing so he modified Gawain's function. Gawain now represented not only the merits of Arthurian chivalry, but also its limitations. Wolfram von Eschenbach, in his expansive adaptation of Chrétien's Conte du Graal, developed this new aspect of Gawain's figure further. There are many parallels to be drawn in the series of adventures experienced by Parzival and Gawain which implicitly invite a comparison between the two knights and which in many cases have a contrastive function.¹⁷ A good example of this is provided by the adventures which Gawan and Parzival experience at the castles of Schastel marveil and Munsalvaesche respectively. Both castles

are ruled by kings who suffer from a sexual injury and who are the cause of much distress to the inhabitants of the castles. Gawan and Parzival act as deliverers, but where Parzival's action at the Grail castle of Munsalvaesche is one of spiritual redemption, Gawan's success at Schastel marveil lies in his physical triumph over evil magic. Parzival frees King Anfortas and his subjects from the punishment imposed on them because of King Anfortas' sin; Gawan frees the ladies imprisoned by Clinschor's spell, but does not release Clinschor from the pain of his injury. The comparison and contrast between the responses of Parzival and Gawan to the situations they find themselves in reveal that Parzival develops a spiritual understanding unknown to Gawan. Although Parzival becomes a member of the Round Table, he eventually leaves it to join a community of a higher order, the Grail keepers.

Many of the elements traditionally associated with Gawain are present in the Prose Lancelot. As in earlier romances, from the outset Gawan's position and influence at court are clearly defined. In the course of the Lancelot proper reference is made to Gawan's father, King Lot of Orkanie, but only twice, and on both occasions the reference is incidental and of no particular significance (I,328,32; II,584,7f.). Gawan identifies himself and is constantly identified as King Artus' nephew (e.g. self-identification: I,168,27f.; I,420,33; I,497,23f.; III,209,17f.; III,416,8 and reference by others: I,214,19; I,476,23f.). Gawan holds a fief from Artus (III,551,15f.) and, as Artus himself recognises, is Artus' loyal vassal (I,537,5ff.). In the absence of a legitimate son, Gawan, it would appear, is heir to his

uncle's throne.¹⁸ Thus, during the False Queen episode, when the barons become restless at Artus' absence, Gawan, as Galahot recognises, is the obvious choice as regent (I,521,2ff.). This impression is further strengthened by the fact that when the people of Orkanie urge Artus to appoint a new ruler to succeed King Lot, Artus nominates Gaharies, Gawan's younger brother (II,701,7ff.). It would seem that as the putative heir to the Kingdom of Logres Gawan forfeits his right to his father's patrimony.

No doubt as a result of his close ties with Artus, Gawan is confident of his position in society and is self-assured. This is manifested in his readiness to give his name when challenged: 'myn name wart nye manne verholt der yn wissen wolt, darumb werdent ir der erst nit: ich bin Gawan geheissen des konig Artus nefe.' (I,402,34f.).¹⁹ However, his confidence does not rest simply on his good connections, but also on his renown. His reputation as a great knight is already established when the Lancelot proper begins, and his name is a byword for excellence (e.g. I,328,31ff.; I,404,25ff.; I,405,31ff.). His reputation is such that the squire Helains von Tavingies delays his investiture twelve years in the hope that he might eventually be dubbed by Gawan (I,335,5ff.). Gawan demonstrates most clearly that he is worthy of his reputation when he is coerced, incognito, into defending the Lady of Rodestock's cause against Segurates. Unrecognised, he is regarded as a poor substitute for himself:

'... So ist auch myn herre Gawan als gut nit zu finden als sie wenet. In funff jarn ist er nit zwirnat in syns ðheims hof, er durchfert alle die werlt durch starck abentúr zu suchen, wann er der best ritter ist

der nu lebet. Sin enmügen wir han nit, ich wil ir
 aber an sin stat einen den fulsten ritter senden der
 ie schilt umb synen hals gedete, das ist disser der
 hie by mir siczt.' Myn herre Gawan antwort im ein
 wort nit, wann er achtet es nit viel. (I,321,10ff.).

However, in his later defeat of Segurates Gawan proves himself
 worthy of his renown.

In the verse romances prior to the Prose Lancelot
 Gawain had initially been the foremost knight at Arthur's court,
 and the hero knight had reached the height of his chivalric
 career when he became the equal of Gawain. In Chrétien and
 Wolfram's Grail romances Gawain remained the exemplar of
 Arthurian chivalry, even though he was superseded in the spiritual
 quest for the Grail by Perceval. Although Gawan emerged as a
 more limited knight than the Grail winner in Chrétien's and
 Wolfram's romances, his reputation, none the less, remained intact
 and his character was in no way undermined:

It is clear that Parzival's story is by far the most
 important part of the poem. It is equally clear,
 however, that Wolfram makes no judgements on the
 relative worth of his heroes' achievements. ...
 The function of Gawan in the poem as a whole is to
 exemplify the standards of courtliness and act as a
 norm against which we can assess Parzival's
 achievements. (20)

In the Gral-Queste of the Prose Lancelot trilogy, however, Gawan
 fails abjectly in the spiritually rigorous quest for the Grail.
 His adherence to and reliance on the dictates of the Arthurian
 code of chivalric conduct are hopelessly inadequate to the demands
 of the Grail quest:

La Queste laisse à Gauvain sa grandeur selon le siècle
 et en montre le néant selon la religion; elle le fait
 brave, loyal, mais mauvais chrétien: sa prouesse même
 tourne au crime et le damne. Gauvain, c'est la
 chevalerie mondaine jugée selon l'esprit cistercien. (21)

Not only does Gawan have no success in the Gral-Queste, but in the Lancelot proper he slips from his position of the first knight of the Round Table. The unknown knight Lancelot quickly acquires a reputation which relegates Gawan to the rank of second best knight (I,354,7ff.). Gawan's inferiority to Lancelot is underlined by Artus. When his knights return to court after a spell of questing and adventuring, Artus demands, as is the custom, that they recount their experiences. He listens to the knights in order of merit, i.e. Lancelot first, then Gawan and then others (e.g. II,434,8ff.). Although Gawan is acclaimed and recognised as second only to Lancelot, there is some discrepancy between his reputation and his actual performance. Gawan is undoubtedly a great knight, but none the less he is overcome in combat not just by Lancelot (e.g. II,650,11ff.), or even by Lancelot's kin (e.g. II,516,10ff.), but also by an insignificant knight, Brydans (II,568,29ff.). We learn late in the narrative how, as a boy, Gawan was blessed with a gift, the doubling of his strength in combat at noon (III,677,9ff.). This attribute stands Gawan in good stead against his adversaries, but at the same time our respect for his personal achievement in combats which extend over the noon period is diminished. Furthermore, even this mythical privilege cannot always guarantee him victory, for example in his long battle against Hestor at the stone path to Sorelois (I,446,8ff.).

Where Gawan's identity is defined in terms of his relationship to Artus, his uncle and feudal lord, for the duration

of the Lancelot proper Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries regularly identify themselves and are recognised by others as Gawan's brothers (e.g. II,143,24; II,149,8; II,177,3). Their role and significance in the narrative are determined by their blood tie with Gawan. This explains in part their lack of prominence in the Gral-Queste, for as this romance is essentially concerned with the spiritual virtue of the individual questing knight, allegiance towards kin or overlord, so influential in the other two parts of the Trilogy, is of little consequence. However, there is an abrupt change of emphasis in the transition from the Gral-Queste to the Tod des König Artus. In the final romance of the Trilogy the narrative focus is concentrated on Artus' court, where latent tensions erupt with the public revelation of Lancelot's adulterous relationship with the Queen. From the very beginning of the Tod des König Artus the leading knights at court are grouped clearly according to their houses and are constantly referred to as belonging to either Ban's geschlecht or Artus' geschlecht (e.g. Ban's: III,446,15; III,498,6f.; III,503,17 and Artus': III,501,12; III,545,12f.; III,617,13f.). This identification in terms of their respective houses prepares us for the polarisation and eventual confrontation between the two kin groups, brought about by Gawan's implacable desire for revenge when Lancelot unwittingly kills Gaheries in his rescue of the Queen (III,557,11ff.).

Like Gawan, it seems that Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries are already established knights at court and that their reputations too are already made. Thus, the narrator is able to

preface the adventures of Gawan's brothers with a thumbnail sketch of their most salient personality traits (II,131-32), a summary of which follows.²² Gawan is the most courtly of the brothers, zealous in his pursuit of chivalric practice, friendly and helpful to all; reference is made to how his strength doubles at midday; he was always loyal to his lord, Artus, popular for his courtesy towards knights and ladies, moderate, wise and refined. Agravant was greater than Gawan only in stature; an excellent knight, but scheming and provocative; although handsome he showed little love or compassion and possessed no particularly good qualities. Guerehes was supple, agile, bold and noble; he had the peculiar physical feature of having a longer right arm than left; he was cautious in his speech unless provoked, when he became immoderate and reckless.²³ The fourth brother was Gaheries, a good knight, brave and adventurous; he was handsome and of the brothers the most blameless in conduct; constant, persevering, generous and popular with the ladies; he loved Gawan dearly and was Gawan's favourite.

This description of the personalities of the brothers implies a history beyond the text of the Prose Lancelot. This implication is reinforced later in the Lancelot proper, when a damsel refers to Guerehes' reputation for inconstancy and reveals what she knows of his past, in particular how he had deserted and broken faith with the 'jungfrauwe von dem Wissen lande' (II,164,8ff.), an incident which is not included in the narrative of the Prose Lancelot.

Although Gawan's character in all the romances is, to use Cormeau's term, pre-formed, we are none the less able to build up a biography for him through looking at his role in the romances prior to the Prose Lancelot. However, the appearances of Gawan's brothers in earlier extant texts are limited on the whole to a mention in passing. It could be that texts in which they played a greater role have been lost to us, or that there were tales about the brothers in oral circulation which were never written down. A further possibility, and in my opinion the most likely, is that the Prose Lancelot romancer created for Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries a set personality to complement that of Gawan.

In the evolution of the Arthurian romance Lancelot was a comparative late-comer to the illustrious society of Round Table knights.²⁴ Consequently the figure of Lancelot had nothing like the weight of association attached to Gawan, although Chrétien's portrayal of him as the devoted lover of Queen Guinevere was to become the feature which defined his individuality and distinguished him from other knights. Just as Gawan's 'präformierter Charakter' is a convention of the Arthurian romance, the portrayal of Lancelot as a young and unknown knight is also a convention. This convention is, of course, not peculiar to the figure of Lancelot, it is a motif which is an important part of the Perceval legend and which, in a greater context, belongs to what folklorists term the Fair Unknown motif.²⁵ The motif of Lancelot as initially an unknown knight

is a traditional element in the Lancelot legend. In Ulrich von Zatzikhoven's romance *Lanzelet* does not discover his name until he has defeated Iweret (II,4644-737).²⁶ This episode is paralleled in the Prose *Lancelot* by Lancelot's discovery of his name only after he has accomplished the adventure of the Dolorose Garde (I,165,34ff.). Chrétien, too, had drawn on the motif of the Fair Unknown in his *Chevalier de la Charrette*, though in a rather oblique fashion. He seems to assume that his audience knows who Lancelot is, although he does not actually name him for most of the romance.²⁷

For the duration of his youth in the Prose *Lancelot* trilogy Lancelot is kept in ignorance of his parentage by his foster-mother, the Lady of the Lake. Lancelot's nobility is, however, evident to all who meet him from his appearance, bearing and manner (I,38,7f. and I,132,4f.).²⁸ Lancelot himself soon shows that he has a keen sense of his own worth. Although he is uncertain about his parentage, he is convinced of his own nobility of spirit (I,94,31ff.) and is ambitious to become a great man (I,94,36ff.).²⁹ Lancelot is still unaware of his identity when he is knighted at King Artus' court, though the Lady of the Lake has by this time given him assurance of his noble birth (I,124,22ff.). After his investiture Lancelot eagerly pursues adventure. When in the course of this he is challenged about his identity, he identifies himself and is identified simply within his role and function as a knight errant (e.g. I,187,28). Lancelot's autonomy as an unidentified knight errant contrasts with the obligations which Gawain immediately

draws attention to, by identifying Artus as his uncle and feudal lord.

Reports of Lancelot's successful anonymous exploits filter back to Artus' court. As Lancelot begins to establish a reputation, curiosity about the unknown knight grows and Artus' desire to have him as his geselle at the Round Table increases correspondingly. The quest for the elusive Lancelot's identity and his membership of the Round Table become the focus for the activity of the Round Table fellowship. Gawan, as the best knight at court, leads the quests for Lancelot, regarding them as second in importance only to the quest for the Grail (I,254,18ff.).

Lancelot's name is revealed, and his reputation is established and publicly recognised in four stages. These four stages are given great prominence in the narrative structure, for they all coincide with events which are of great significance for Artus and his court:

1) Lancelot discovers his parentage after he has achieved the adventure of the Dolorose Garde (I,165,34f.), an adventure in which Artus, Ginover and their court all became involved. Lancelot's achievement at Dolorose Garde prompts Artus to call for a quest for the unknown knight.

2) It is not until the tourney between Artus and the King from Uber den Marcken, at which Lancelot proves himself to be the best knight in the field, that Gawan learns Lancelot's name (I,218,19f.). Gawan reports back to Artus that King Ban's son is still alive. There is much rejoicing at this, but Lancelot slips away.³⁰

3) After Lancelot has effected an end to the battle between Artus and Galahot, Galahot learns of Lancelot's passion for the Queen and arranges a meeting between them. At this meeting the Queen elicits from Lancelot his identity and an admission of responsibility for all the deeds which had astounded the court (I,293,10f.).

4) Although the Queen now knows Lancelot's identity, the court is again in ignorance, for they do not know that it was Lancelot who excelled himself on their behalf in the battle against Galahot. Gawan, together with Hestor, eventually completes a further quest for Lancelot, when he discovers him with Galahot on the Verlorne Werd in Sorelois (I,455,13ff.). All four go to the aid of King Artus, who is fighting a battle in Scotland. Lancelot excels himself again and through his personal endeavour once more rescues Artus from his foes. At the conclusion of this episode Gawan makes known to Artus, Lancelot's identity (I,478,1f.). Subsequent to this, at Artus' invitation and Ginover's exhortation, Lancelot, together with Galahot and Hestor, becomes a knight of the Round Table (I,481,15ff.).

It is significant that after Lancelot has joined the Round Table there are no further threats to Artus from invading foes. It is as if the accession of Lancelot to the company of Round Table knights guaranteed the safety of the Kingdom of Logres. This security is not shaken, until Lancelot is forced in the final stages of the Tod des König Artus to leave the Kingdom of Logres. When Artus finds himself under attack first from the Romans and

then from his own kinsman, Morderet, he comes to understand only too well the support Lancelot gave him (III,750,8ff.). Almost a half of the Lancelot proper (virtually all of Kluge's volume I) is dominated by the quest for Lancelot's identity and his membership of the Round Table. However, even once this has been achieved, Lancelot still remains the goal of the majority of the quests, for, as Artus laments (II,41,7ff.), he is constantly absent from court in his pursuit of adventure.

After he has joined the Round Table, Lancelot continues to identify himself primarily as a knight errant (e.g. II,94,27; II,313,22; II,638,18; II,641,24f.; II,653,20). By contrast with Gawain, Lancelot, even when he has established a considerable reputation, is reluctant to give his name.³¹ When he does, he has two ways of doing so, reflecting his background and upbringing. He identifies himself either as 'Lancelot vom Lac' or as 'Konig Bans sun', or indeed, on occasion as both (e.g. II,472,25f.; II,590,16f.; III,81,15). As a result of King Ban being despoiled of his lands by Claudas, King of the Wust Lant, Lancelot has been disinherited. The theme of Lancelot's disinheritance extends throughout the Lancelot proper, though it is only given prominence on two occasions: at the very beginning when Claudas' attack on Ban is related, and in the war in Flanders when Artus helps Lancelot to conquer Claudas. Otherwise reference is made to Lancelot's disinherited state only in passing (e.g. II,271,7ff.; II,541,7), but the references are sufficient to keep this aspect of Lancelot's identity in mind.³² Lancelot has no fixed position in feudal society. However, he is able to turn this unfortunate

circumstance to his advantage in his career as a knight errant. The knight errant is essentially an autonomous individual, who chooses to put himself at the service of others. For knights who also have feudal obligations to honour, this can cause a conflict of loyalties, e.g. when Gawan leads a quest for Lancelot by the knights errant of the Round Table, he finds that he has to interrupt it to go to the assistance of his feudal Lord, Artus, in his battle against Galahot (I,260,16ff.). As Lancelot has no feudal obligations to observe, he can order his priorities as he will. Lancelot serves Artus, but within the context of the Round Table, a non-hierarchical fellowship in which Artus is primus inter pares, as Artus himself draws attention to in the Lancelot proper (II,440,25ff.). Furthermore, Lancelot's membership of the Round Table is at the wish of the Queen (I,480,4ff.).³³ And when he does win back his lands from Claudas with Artus' help, his motivation to do so results from Claudas having insulted the Queen (II,678,1ff.). Lancelot tells the Queen that she has been his inspiration and compensation for having been driven out of his lands (II,439,15ff.).³⁴

Lancelot's chivalric identity is placed within a context which stretches far beyond the timespan of King Artus' reign. On the very first page of the Lancelot proper we are told by the narrator that Lancelot was baptised Galaat (I,1,6f.), a name which significantly has biblical associations.³⁵ Lancelot learns later that the name he is known by is that of his paternal grandfather (I,617,7f. and II,521,6f.). It becomes clear in the course of the Lancelot proper that Lancelot should have been the

Grail winner, but that he forfeited the Grail adventure through his sinful relationship with the Queen (II,438,14ff.). His son receives Lancelot's baptismal name and achieves the Grail quest.³⁶

In the verse romances Arthur's court appeared to exist in a time vacuum, to be a Golden Age.³⁷ The chronology was limited to either the sequence of adventures undergone by the hero knight, or extended to encompass his biography, including, possibly, a brief account of his father's life in as far as it was relevant to his own.³⁸ In the Prose Lancelot the hero knight has not only a father, but also a son, who have a role to play in the narrative. Furthermore, Lancelot's discovery of his identity is not restricted to his parentage. In the course of adventures connected directly with the Grail quest in the Lancelot proper, Lancelot learns something about his illustrious lineage. This partial revelation of his ancestry anticipates the full account of his son's descent in the Gral-Queste. Lancelot is the penultimate figure in a line which is destined, as his forefather King Solomon knew (III,309,10f.), to terminate and culminate in Galaat, the pure and chaste Grail winner.³⁹ Thus, the traditional contrast between the static element in the portrayal of Gawan, the established knight, and the dynamic element in the portrayal of the unknown knight who has to prove himself and create his reputation is extended to include a historical dimension. Gawan and his brothers are seen solely within the context of Artus' reign. The fundamental dynamics of the Prose Lancelot trilogy lie, however, in the impact of the lineage of King Ban with its Grail connections on the Arthurian world. Lancelot and Galaat

are presented as the agents of history. Galaat's achievement of the Grail entails the end of the adventures of the Kingdom of Logres and removes the function for which the Round Table was created. Lancelot's adultery with the Queen wrecks the fellowship of the Round Table and is a major factor in the downfall of Artus. The romancer of the Estoire del Saint Graal, a later addition to the Prose Lancelot trilogy, seems not to have understood the significance of this contrast, for he provides Gawan and his brothers with a lineage which extends back to Peter, a relative of Joseph of Arimathia, who becomes king of Orcany on his marriage to the daughter of Orcan.⁴⁰ I agree with Jean Frappier's assessment of this addition as 'une complète erreur relativement à la conception fondamentale qui dans le Lancelot propre et la Queste faisait de l'ascendance sainte un privilège des prédestinés.'⁴¹

The very first sentence of the Lancelot proper draws our attention to symmetrical patterns in the kinship structure of Lancelot's family, for we are told that King Ban and King Bohort 'waren gebrudere von vatter und von mutter, und sie hatten zwo schwester zu wybe' (I, 1, 2f.).⁴² Lionel and Bohort are, therefore, first cousins on both the mother's and the father's side.⁴³ This symmetry is developed further within the narrative of the Prose Lancelot, for the three generations of Ban, Lancelot and Galaat are paralleled by those of Bohort, brother of Ban, Bohort, cousin of Lancelot, and Helyas, son of the younger Bohort.⁴⁴ Not only is the symmetry in familial structures established at the outset, but also the close dependence of the

fortunes of Bohort's family on Ban's. The fate of King Ban and his wife, Alene, is mirrored by that of his brother Bohort and his wife Evaine. When Bohort learns of Ban's death he is so grief-stricken that he survives Ban by only three days:

'... und wenet man wol furware das er sturb von ruwen und von leyde, wann sin bruder so jemerlich dott verleib' (I,16,32f.).

The death of Bohort leaves his lands open to attack by Claudas and Queen Evaine is forced to flee with her two sons, who eventually come, as did Lancelot, under the guardianship of the Lady of the Lake. Evaine finally enters the same convent as her sister Alene (I,18,31ff.). The strength of Bohort's attachment to Ban is later renewed in his son's devotion to Lancelot.

Just as Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries regularly identify themselves and are identified as Gawan's brothers, so Lyonel and Bohort similarly identify themselves constantly with reference to Lancelot. However, in contrast to the equality of status which exists in the relationship between Gawan and his brothers, Lyonel and Bohort regard Lancelot as their 'herr und nefe' (e.g. II,350,11; II,620,5f.; II,623,22). The quality of their relationship with Lancelot has a closer parallel in Gawan's with Artus, for Gawan refers to Artus as his 'herr' (e.g. I,267,21; I,281,18; I,459,22). Throughout the Lancelot proper Lyonel and Bohort's deference to Lancelot is made clear, for example Bohort will not accept membership of the Round Table until he has consulted Lancelot (II,12,31f.). When Lancelot rescues Lyonel from King Vagor's prison he identifies himself as the chief member of his kin: 'wann er geboren ist uss der art da ich herre bin und

ist myn nehster nefe' (II,494,9f.). Lancelot's superiority over his cousins does not seem to rest on his feudal status, for there is no mention that his cousins are in fief to him. Rather it would appear that their deference to him is a recognition of his chivalric excellence. Their subordination to Lancelot is further emphasised by the fact that both the Lady of the Lake (I,130,17ff.) and the Queen (II,225,27ff.) regard them as emotional substitutes for Lancelot in his absence.

As it is not revealed that Hestor is Lancelot's half-brother until the Lancelot proper is well advanced (II,306,22ff.), Hestor's association with Lancelot in this first part of the Trilogy is clearly not as close as that of his cousins. However, an oblique connection is made between Lancelot and Hestor in so far as Hestor identifies himself when challenged as Queen Ginover's knight (e.g. I,367,34f.; I,376,23f.; I,445,27f.). The narrator explains, with specific reference to Hestor, the custom at court of the Queen taking promising knights under her wing, until they had proved themselves and could be admitted to the Round Table fellowship (I,345,34ff.). Furthermore, there is a certain physical resemblance between Lancelot and Hestor in respect of their hair. Both are said to have curly hair which is gold in colour, although Lancelot's darkens as he matures (Lancelot I,35,17f. and Hestor, I,317,11f.).⁴⁵ Once Hestor's blood tie with Lancelot is made known, Hestor frequently identifies himself as Lancelot's brother and he too refers to Lancelot as his 'herr' (e.g. II,670,21f.; II,798,10f.). His solidarity with Lancelot is expressed fully in the Tod des König Artus, where he and Lancelot's

cousins are referred to collectively as Ban's geschlecht.

The portrayal of Lancelot's development is complemented by the delineation of Lyonel, Bohort and Hestor. Like Lancelot they all enter the narrative as young, unknown knights, who have to prove themselves and win themselves a reputation. The degree to which they are successful in this is demonstrated by the order of merit which is drawn up at Artus' court after the final quest, for Lancelot, in the Lancelot proper. The ranking that is established is as follows: 'Sie antworten alle, Bohort was der best ritter under yn allen, ... darnach Hectorn, hern Gawan, Gaheries, Lyonel und konig Bandemagus' (II,662,16ff.).⁴⁶ Remembering that Lancelot is generally acknowledged as the best knight in the world, the ranking of Bohort and Hestor ahead of Gawan and Gaheries clearly testifies to the supremacy of Ban's geschlecht over Artus', a supremacy that is established in the Lancelot proper and that obtains throughout the Trilogy.

Lyonel is placed by the Lady of the Lake in Lancelot's charge, until he is ready to be invested as a knight.⁴⁷ On his arrival in Sorelois to join Lancelot we are told: 'Er (Lyonel) dett auch sitherre manige herliche ritterschafft, als uns diss b^och furter wol bescheiden sol' (I,305,15). However, very few adventures are in fact recorded for Lyonel as a knight errant. In the Lancelot proper he is identified more with the feudal world, for his presence in the romance is greatest when, enraged by Claudas' usurpation of his father's lands, he expresses his determination to win back his patrimony (e.g. I,54,33ff.). After the defeat of Claudas in the war in Flanders Lancelot offers

Bohort, Lyonel and Hestor the kingdoms of Gaune, Gaule and Bonewig respectively (II,777,7f.). Bohort refuses his kingdom on the grounds that he does not want to interrupt his career as a knight errant and he argues that it would also be a great pity to compromise Hestor's chivalric career. However, he makes no such case for Lyonel and, in the absence of any other comment, we are left with the impression that Lyonel is prepared to accept the kingdom offered to him.

By contrast, Hestor is clearly identified with the world of knight errantry, and many of his adventures are recorded. These adventures occur largely during his quest for Gawan and are his testing ground as a knight, for the Queen assures him that if he succeeds, she will accept him as her knight (I,345,30ff.). The completion and culmination of Hestor's quest is achieved in the context of an episode which in its details follows the pattern of that traditional motif in the verse romances which I referred to above (p. 152), i.e. the test of the hero knight's prowess in an incognito combat against Gawain, the best knight at Arthur's court. In their combat at the stone path to Sorelois Hestor and Gawan prove themselves to be very evenly matched and neither is defeated, for the fight is broken off when Gawan recognises Hestor's sword as being the one he had presented to Hestor (I,446,33f.). We are left with the impression that Hestor is at least the equal of Gawan. Indeed, Hestor had already been mistaken for Gawan when he freed his fellow questers Ywan and Segremors from prison (I,390,25f.). And later Alene one Glichen and her sister regard Hestor as a worthy substitute for Gawan when they need a champion of

justice (I,437,29ff.). Hestor encounters Gawan incognito a second time. On this occasion, however, he proves to be a better knight than Gawan, for Hestor unhorses him. His skill is such that Gawan is prompted to comment that had he not known (as he erroneously thought) that Lancelot was dead, he would have believed the knight in red armour to have been Lancelot (II,128,7f.).⁴⁸ Through this comment Gawan underlines Lancelot's reputation as the measure of excellence, and, by identifying Hestor with Lancelot, he further reinforces the supremacy of Lancelot's kin. Hestor's excellence, and that of his kin, is affirmed again towards the end of the Lancelot proper, when the narrator, as a comment on Hestor's performance in a joust against Perceval, states that Hestor 'der best sticher der welt was (one sin herrn und bruder und Bohort)' (II,798,15f.).

Hestor's involvement with Gawan and the definition of his excellence through Gawan is paralleled closely by Bohort's association with Lancelot. In many respects Bohort functions as a reflection of Lancelot, though, as I hope will emerge from what follows, to see him only in this role is too limited a view.⁴⁹ The parallelism between the careers of Lancelot and Bohort is immediately suggested when Bohort arrives at Artus' court for the first time. His entrance on a cart reminds us of how Lancelot had willingly disgraced himself by riding in a cart, so that he might see the Queen. We learn that Bohort has only recently been knighted (II,12,17f.) and that his accoutrement is white as was Lancelot's on the occasion of his investiture (I,128,16ff.). When the Lady of the Lake reveals that Bohort is Lancelot's

cousin, Artus is as eager to have Bohort at the Round Table as he was for the company of Lancelot, and he offers Bohort unconditional membership of the fellowship. Bohort, however, refuses, for he feels inexperienced, and he wishes to consult Lancelot first before committing himself. Lancelot advises Bohort in the same sense as the Lady of the Lake had advised him (I,159,38f.), i.e. not to stay at court, but to search for adventure and establish his name (II,39,11ff.). The adventures of Bohort are related in some detail, and as the romance progresses he creates such a creditable reputation for himself that he comes to be recognised as a worthy substitute as a champion of justice not only for Gawan as Hestor was, but also for Lancelot. Thus, the Lady of Galnoie instructs the damsel whom she sends to Artus' court to find a champion, that, in the event of Lancelot and Gawan not being present, she should ask for Bohort's services (II,224,16f.).

Bohort's prowess in chivalric combat is clear from his first appearance at Artus' court when he issues a challenge to Artus' knights and promptly defeats all those who ride against him (II,10,1ff.). In the Lancelot proper this ability culminates in the adventure of Burg Tartre, where Bohort, in accordance with the dictates of the adventure, must fight incognito against all-comers, though he may spare the lives of his kin and those from Artus' court (II,515,13ff.). Amongst others Bohort successfully defeats Gawan and his own cousin Hestor. Eventually Lancelot arrives and there ensues an evenly matched combat, which is terminated only when Lancelot recognises Bohort's sword as that

of his friend, Galahot, and the one he himself had given to Bohort.⁵⁰ This adventure has clear parallels with Gawan's defence of the stone path at Sorelois, both in terms of the action and the implication of the action. Thus, both Gawan and Bohort find themselves obliged to fight all-comers; Bohort and Lancelot fight incognito as did Hestor and Gawan; both combats are terminated by the recognition of a sword given as a gift. Bohort's encounter incognito with Lancelot is clearly modelled on that traditional motif of the hero knight's combat against Gawan, but the significant difference is that Lancelot has become the measure of excellence, Gawan having been defeated earlier in the adventure.⁵¹

At a very early stage in the Lancelot proper we learn that King Ban was a greater knight than his brother King Bohort. The prose romancer takes care to maintain this superiority in Lancelot's relationship with his cousins. Thus, although the younger Bohort achieves great excellence, he does not endanger Lancelot's position as the foremost knight, but rather enhances Lancelot's pre-eminence while establishing his own reputation. Bohort constantly acknowledges Lancelot as his lord (e.g. II,41,18f.; II,58,21f.; II,345,13f.) and frequently asserts that Lancelot is the best knight in the world (II,69,1; II,77,2f.; II,513,22).

Bohort seems as unconcerned as Lancelot does to win back his father's lands from Claudas. However, in the course of the Lancelot proper we are reminded about this aspect of his identity from time to time by occasional references to his disinherited

state. Sometimes Bohort identifies himself as an exile, and sometimes others refer to him as such (e.g. II,83,15f.; II,108,17f.; II,109,29; II,181,5; II,321,9; II,513,21). Like Lancelot, Bohort is a stranger to the Kingdom of Logres and thus must create his reputation entirely through his own efforts.

The blood tie as a character determinant

The comparison and contrast which is drawn consistently throughout the Prose Lancelot between the two central protagonists, Lancelot and Gawan, is amplified by the delineation of their kinsmen. Although the figures of Lyonel, Bohort, Hestor, Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries do have their own clearly defined features, at the same time the prose romancer explores further through them personality traits which are distinctively those of Lancelot or of Gawan. This amplification has a twofold function in the narrative, for it not only extends the portrayal of Lancelot and Gawan, but it also underlines the bond of kinship.

The force of this bond is illustrated very early in the Lancelot proper. While the Lady of the Lake has Lancelot and his cousins in her care, she keeps them ignorant of their blood tie. However, one day Lancelot instinctively addresses Lyonel as 'lieber nefe' (I,93,15f.). The Lady of the Lake is very surprised and challenges Lancelot about how he dared to refer to Lyonel, a king's son, as his relative. Lancelot can give no real explanation: "'Frauw", sprach er und schampt sich sere, "also kam mir das wort zum munde, und hüt mich nit an dem sprechen."' (I,94,20f.).⁵²

In a description of Lancelot's physique the narrator comments that Lancelot was well proportioned, apart from his chest which was unusually large to accommodate his gross hercz (I,35,21ff.). The intensity of Lancelot's emotional responses corresponds to the size of his heart. This intensity, in particular with reference to his capacity for anger, is reflected in Lyonel. This is demonstrated early in the Lancelot proper when Claudas imprisons Lyonel and Bohort. The narrator comments about the force of Lyonel's reaction: 'wann er was der unsinnigste mensch in sin zorn der ye geboren wart, ane Lancelot alleyn' (I,53,1f.). The narrator goes on to compare Lyonel's reaction here with a later incident directly after his investiture. There Lyonel parallels Lancelot in his impulsive wish to embark immediately on the pursuit of adventure after having been knighted. When Lyonel hears that Lancelot and the Duke of Clarence have set out in search of Gawan without him, he is annoyed and wishes to pursue them. Galahot tries to restrain him, but Lyonel impetuously frees himself by cutting his reins, which Galahot had hold of. This impetuous action causes Galahot to recognise the affinity which exists between Lyonel and Lancelot: '"Ay herze ane zaum", sprach er, "herze one zaum, wie wol magstu Lancelotes neve sin mit der unmass"' (I,557,11f.). The negative potential of this lack of moderation is first explored in the Gral-Queste when Lyonel is angered by Bohort's decision to go to the assistance of a damsel rather than himself at a moment of crisis (III,257,7ff.). Lyonel's anger, we are told, is fanned by the devil (III,259,1f.), and he becomes so enraged that he slays a holy man and Galogrevant when they

attempt to prevent him killing Bohort. Only divine intervention saves Lyonel from fratricide (III,263,15ff.).

In the Tod des König Artus there is a striking shift in the exploration of this trait of immoderation shared by Lancelot and Lyonel. Lyonel plays only a small part in this final romance, for his function in the narrative is restricted almost entirely to his identification as one of Ban's geschlecht. That feature which had characterised him is manifested instead by Gawan. In the Trilogy Lancelot's lack of moderation consists primarily in his absolute devotion to the Queen. However, in the Tod des König Artus Lancelot is able to return Ginover to Artus for the sake of her ere, despite the cost to himself (III,609,5ff.). The juxtaposition in the narrative of this sacrifice of what is dearest to him and Gawan's implacable desire for revenge for Lancelot's unwitting killing of Gaheries invites a comparison, a comparison which quickly becomes a sharp contrast, for Lancelot's action is seen to be noble and disinterested, where Gawan's response is blind and self-centred. Throughout the Trilogy Gawan had been very conscious of his obligations as Artus' knight and as a member of the Round Table. He constantly demonstrated concern for the safety of the realm (e.g. I,260,16ff.) and for the reputation of the Round Table (e.g. I,254,8ff.). However, the personal grief Gawan suffers as a result of his brother's death arouses in him an uncontrollable anger, the quality of which is the same as that anger which was portrayed so negatively in the Gral-Queste through Lyonel. Even though a war against Lancelot is considered a great risk (III,573,9ff.; III,575,11ff.), Gawan

persists in his pursuit of vengeance and in doing so he undermines the stability of the Kingdom of Logres and wrecks the fellowship of the Round Table. In the past Lancelot had been immoderate in his devotion to the Queen, while Gawan had constantly sought to honour all his obligations equally. However, in the Tod des K nig Artus it is Lancelot who has the strength to forego personal interest, while Gawan insists on a blood feud.

In temperament the most prominent feature shared by Lancelot and Hestor is their willing subservience and devotion as lovers. The intensity of Hestor's love for his lady is comparable to Lancelot's for Ginover, as is illustrated by the ability Hestor shares with Lancelot to lose himself in thought about his lady (e.g. Hestor I,361,28ff.; Lancelot II,411,20ff.). More than any other knight Lancelot exemplifies the fruitful interdependence of love and chivalric prowess which lies at the centre of so many Arthurian romances. Although Lancelot forfeited the Grail through his adultery with the Queen, Ginover is none the less the inspiration for his chivalric achievements in the Lancelot proper (II,439,4ff.). Hestor similarly draws strength from the love he has for his lady (I,319,34ff.; I,320,16ff.). Any estrangement from Ginover causes Lancelot great distress and even on occasion madness (e.g. II,781,15ff.). Hestor, too, finds himself wretched at the thought of having distressed his lady (I,345,25ff.). Lancelot's love for Ginover is absolute and spurs him on to many great deeds. For her part, Ginover has great responsibility in the influence she can

exercise over Lancelot's actions. This responsibility is illustrated vividly when the Queen commands Lancelot to fight against Artus' knights in the battle against the Saxons, so that the action might be brought close to where she is, thus allowing her a better view (I,458,32ff.). Ginover's frivolous request at a time of crisis and Lancelot's immediate fulfilment of it reveal the vulnerability of a knight enslaved by love to his lady. The negative potential of unquestioning obedience to one's lady is merely touched on in Lancelot's and Ginover's relationship, for Ginover's behaviour in the battle against the Saxons remains an isolated incident. This negative potential is, however, explored more fully through Hestor. Hestor's lady is afraid of losing Hestor in chivalric combat, and thus she extracts a promise from him that he will not take up the challenge to fight Segurates, although he would dearly like to do so (I,319,8ff.).⁵³ Later at Artus' court she forbids Hestor to undertake a quest for Gawan and for a long time she withstands all efforts to persuade her to change her mind (I,339,31ff.). Not surprisingly, it is Ginover who through her relationship with Lancelot has insight into her feelings of fear at the thought of losing Hestor (I,341,14f.; I,341,24ff.). However, it is also Ginover who fully recognises the negative effects of such an excessive love and eventually she manages to persuade Hestor's lady to let him set out in search of Gawan (I,344,28ff.). Thus there are many clear parallels to be drawn between Hestor and Lancelot as lovers, but the nature of their respective love relationships is contrasted. The inhibiting influence Hestor's lady exerts over him highlights by contrast the positive

inspiration Lancelot draws from Ginover.

Horst Koch has observed that one of the recurrent phrases used to describe Lancelot's reactions to situations and events in the Lancelot proper is: 'er schampt sich ussermassen sere' (e.g. I,302,10f.; I,453,29; I,455.26f.; I,462,29f.; I,480,14; I,566,15f; I,624,36).⁵⁴ Most of the occurrences of this phrase which Koch notes are generally with reference to Lancelot's bashfulness with the Queen. However, this, or a very similar phrase, is also used to express Lancelot's modesty, when attention is drawn to his chivalric prowess (e.g. II,259,16). Thus, when Artus honours Lancelot at court by seating him very close to him at table, the narrator tells us: 'Aber Lantzelot gewan sin grosselich schame und hett sin woil gewolt das er nit da gewest were' (II,25,6f.). Bohort shares with Lancelot this characteristic of modesty, indeed it is even more marked in him. Thus, when Artus honours Bohort at table, as he did Lancelot, we are told: 'Aber er (Bohort) saczt sich gar ungerne an das end, wann in der welt keyn schemiger man was als er' (II,418,11f.). In Hestor, too, there is a pronounced trait of modesty. His response to a laudatory report of his own fighting prowess is to be as embarrassed as Bohort and Lancelot were, when honoured by King Artus (I,379,23). And it is out of a sense of humility that he conceals for some time the fact that he is Lancelot's half-brother (II,464,17ff.).

The theme of modesty amongst Lancelot's kin is continued in the Gral-Queste, but in a religious context rather than a chivalric one. Thus, Bohort, for example, when praised by an

abbot for his goodness, 'schweyg und schamete sich umb des willen das yne der apt hielt vor eyne guten menschen' (III,256,6). This characteristic of modesty is closely allied to humility (demütikeyt), one of the salient virtues with which, as a holy man tells him, Lancelot had been blessed, before becoming a knight (III,167,16ff.), but which he had turned into hoffart when he yielded to temptation in loving Ginover (III,171,12). In the Gral-Queste the full negative implications of hoffart are revealed through dreams which Gawan and Hestor have. Gawan's dream is concerned with the general moral state of the Round Table (III,212,8ff.), where Hestor involves himself and Lancelot specifically. Where in the Lancelot proper Hestor resembles Lancelot in his modesty, in the Gral-Queste they are linked by their sin of hoffart (III,215,14f.). The holy man who interprets Hestor's dream (III,215,10ff.), explains clearly how Lancelot will come to understand the sins he has committed, and how, through Jesus Christ, he will atone and regain his demütikeyt. Hestor, however, will make no moral progress, but is condemned for his hoffart together with his lack of 'reynikeit, warheit, abstinencia' (III,219,8f.).

Where Bohort's career forms a close parallel to Lancelot's in the Lancelot proper, in the Gral-Queste he too functions as a contrast, but, unlike Hestor, he is judged to be exemplary. Bohort's chaste conduct ensures that that virtue of demütikeyt, which is 'also naturlichen gewurczelt' (III,263,8) in him, as it was in Lancelot, thrives. The strength of this virtue in Bohort is a powerful factor in his success in the

Grail quest. Thus the portrayal of Bohort amplifies that aspect of Lancelot's nature which would have fitted him to be the Grail winner, while that of Hestor amplifies that aspect of him which bars him from the final achievement in the quest for the Grail.

The above examination of how Lancelot's kin amplify aspects of Lancelot's nature reveals that there is a certain balance between positive and negative features in the portrayal of Lancelot, Bohort, Lionel and Hestor as a kin group. Bohort is most closely associated with Lancelot, and he amplifies positive traits in Lancelot's personality, whereas the negative potential of some aspects of Lancelot's nature are explored through Lionel and Hestor. There is a similar division in the corporate identity of Gawan and his brothers; a close affinity exists between Gawan and Gaheries on the one hand, and Agravant and Guerehes on the other. Gaheries is Gawan's favourite brother, and, although all three of Gawan's brothers die at the hands of Lancelot and Bohort in the Tod des K nig Artus, it is Gaheries' death which incenses Gawan and drives him to his unremitting pursuit of vengeance. The division between the pairs of brothers is indicated already in the Lancelot proper at the tourney between King Artus and the King from Uber den Marcken. At this tourney Gawan and Gaheries try to dissuade their two brothers from riding against Lancelot, who is incognito, out of concern for their safety. Agravant and Guerehes, however, do not heed their warnings and are duly defeated by Lancelot (I,217,18ff.). A similar incident occurs early in

the Tod des König Artus at the tourney at Gintiestre, for Gawan and Gaheries do not participate, for fear they might jeopardise their relationship with Lancelot (III,403,5ff.).

The difference in attitude between the two pairs of brothers is magnified into a rift between them in the Tod des König Artus over the issue of Lancelot's adultery with the Queen. Gawan and Gaheries attempt to withhold the talk of Lancelot's adultery from Artus (III,532,16ff.), fearing for the safety of the realm should a conflict arise between their kin and Lancelot's. However, Agravant, with the support of Guerehes and Morderet, reveals his suspicions about Lancelot to Artus. He couches his remarks to Artus in terms of his feudal duty: 'Ich sagte herren Gawin und mynen andern brudern das sie meyneydig weren das sie als lang verschwigen hetten die schande und die unfür die uch herre Lanczlot thût' (III,534,2ff.).⁵⁵ As I have already noted (p. 164), Gawan frequently demonstrates in the Lancelot proper that he is mindful of his obligations to Artus and that he is particularly concerned not to be 'meyneydig' (I,532,10ff.). Accordingly, Agravant and Guerehes have been seen by Helen Blake in her investigation of narrative structures in the Mort Artu as reflecting the feudal aspect of Gawan's identity, while Gaheries is imbued more with the courtly side of Gawan's nature.⁵⁶ This is a valid interpretation, but Agravant's motivation for denouncing Lancelot to Artus is more complex than Blake's observation would suggest. The narrator makes quite clear what Agravant's primary motive is: 'Das det er men umb des willen das er Lanczelot zorn darumb thun wolt dann das er die frauwen vor

schanden behúten wolt' (III,391,8f.).

In the thumbnail sketches of Gawan's brothers, Agravant is delineated in a very negative light (II,131,36ff.), and he remains a negative figure throughout the Trilogy.⁵⁷ Thus, for example, we are told about Agravant: 'also was Egrevaim, sit er sich icht vermocht, ie und ie hochvertig und unbarmherzig' (I,359,5f.). This negative trait of being hohvertig becomes his distinguishing feature, and he is referred to as 'Agravant der Hohfertig' (II,668,5). Agravant has no role to play in the Gral-Queste, but the theme of hoffart which is explored most fully through him in the Lancelot proper, is generalised into one of the major accusations levelled at the Round Table. Gawan, traditionally the exemplary knight of the Round Table, bears the brunt of these accusations. He is enlightened about the moral state of the Round Table by a holy man who interprets a dream he has about bulls: 'By den stieren soltu verstan die gesellen von der tafelrunden, die da umb unkuscheit und durch hoffart sint gevallen in dötlich sünde ...' (III,212,20ff.). The theme of hoffart is continued in the Tod des König Artus, for Gawan, when he is on his death-bed, recognises his blind insistence on revenge for the death of Gaheries as hoffart. He instructs Artus to have the following inscription placed on his coffin: '"Hie lyt Gahariet und herre Gawin, die herre Lanczlot erschlug umb herrn Gawins hoffart"' (III,714,6ff.).

That the Round Table knights, according to the Gral-Queste, are guilty of unkuscheit as well as hoffart is also anticipated to some extent in the portrayal of Gawan and his

brothers in the Lancelot proper. In discussing those features which are generally associated in the Old French romances with the figure of Gauvain, Keith Busby has drawn attention to the fact that 'just as he is the byword for other ideal aspects of a knight's existence, so he also seems to be well known for his amorous activities'.⁵⁸ He goes on to note that a common element in his portrayal is his rather cavalier attitude towards ladies. In the Prose Lancelot, however, although Gawan is capable of inspiring great love, namely in the Lady of Rodestock (I,344,10f.) and the Lady of Belot (III,719,4ff.), his amorous exploits are in fact restricted to two incidents which are separated by a great tract of narrative:

1) When in company with Gifflet, Gawan meets two damsels (I,408,4ff.), and he offers one of them his love, but is rejected on the grounds that she must take him to her more beautiful mistress, the daughter of the King of Norgales. Gawan is led to the damsel's mistress, and he lies with her. He just manages to escape with his life after the King of Norgales discovers his presence and sets twenty knights on him. Gawan never returns to the daughter.

2) Gawan offers the Lady of Challot his love, but nothing comes of it, for he is alarmed when he thinks, mistakenly, that she is Lancelot's mistress (III,418,15ff.).

However, the manifestation of Gawan's philandering proclivities when in the presence of the Grail at Corbenic - he looks at the Grail maiden rather than the Grail itself - helps to prepare us for his condemnation in the Gral-Queste, together with the other knights of the Round Table, on account of his unkuscheit

(III,213,1f.).⁵⁹

This amorous side of Gawan's nature is developed in the Lancelot proper by extension in the portrayal of his brothers.⁶⁰ Of the adventures related for Guerehes the greater part are concerned with his relations with women. As the following summary of two interlocked adventures will demonstrate, he shows himself to be a knight highly conscious of his duty to succour ladies in distress: He meets three ladies, two of whom involve him in a complicated sequence of events. The youngest of the three tells him how she has suffered at the hands of her husband, a 'marschalk ... von gebuwers adern' (II,155,14f.). Her husband had won her by coercion and was very jealous of her. When Lancelot had stayed with them one night, he had forced her to draw a comparison between himself and Lancelot. She did so, to her husband's disadvantage. For her honesty he reduced her to the status of a chambermaid. Guerehes is outraged at the tale and swears as a knight to avenge her:

Und ob ich des nit endete, so wolt ich das mich nymmer
keyn man vor eynen ritter hielt, ob ich nit so vil dete
das die schande syn solt syn und die ere myn und uwer,
das wissent furware sunder zwyvel! (II,158,7ff.).

He eventually achieves this, but only after another adventure on behalf of the most senior of the three ladies he met. She relates how she was forced to give her daughter in marriage to a vicious knight who was not of noble birth. Guerehes rescues her daughter and completes his chivalric duty by using the formula customary in such instances in the Prose Lancelot (e.g. II,200,17) of asking whether he has completed the adventure satisfactorily: 'Und Guerehes kam zu der jungfrauwe und sagt: "Han ichs gnung

gethan?"' (II, 163, 21f.).

Guerehes, then, performs his chivalric role in an exemplary fashion, but his virtue as a knight errant is vitiated by that philandering nature which he shares with Gawan, indeed which he manifests to a greater extent than Gawan. When he has rescued the daughter of the most senior of the three ladies, he offers her his love, but is rebuffed, not only because she already has a lover, but also because he has acquired a reputation for inconstancy. She reveals to him what she knows of his past (a past unknown to us as readers, for it has not been included in the text), in particular how he had deserted and broken faith with 'die jungfrauwe von dem Wissen lande' (II, 164, 8ff.). The narrative includes a further adventure of Guerehes which testifies to how Guerehes won this reputation. One night he comes upon four tents (II, 174, 19ff.). In one he finds food to satisfy his hunger, and then entering another he lies down beside a lady, unaware that her husband is also present. He makes love to the lady, who responds thinking he is her husband. When the husband realises what is happening, he attacks Guerehes, but is killed by him. Guerehes carries the lady off with him, forcing her to be his paramour. He fights off her four brothers who attempt to rescue her, but eventually the lady manages to secure herself from him by entering a convent.⁶¹

Few of Agravant's adventures are related, perhaps because, like Lyonel, he is associated more with the feudal world rather than the world of knight errantry. However, an account of how he sustained severe injuries to his arm and leg reveals

that he possesses something of that same libidinous nature as his brothers; but in his case, in keeping with the generally negative portrayal of him, it has been developed into a callous and brutal attitude towards women. The wound on his arm he had received from a damsel who was avenging a blow Agravant had dealt her lover on the arm (I,358,15ff.). He assumes that the injury to his leg was inflicted by a damsel whom he had abused. He had wilfully abducted this damsel, defeated her lover and then wanted to make love to her against her will. However, on discovering that she had a festering wound on her leg, he was very rude and insulting towards her. She had warned him that he would have cause to regret his words and actions later (I,358,35ff.).

In matters of the heart Gaheries differs from his brothers. Although he is reputed to be popular with the ladies (II,132,8), we hear nothing of any amorous involvement on his part.⁶² The majority of his adventures are concerned with formal chivalric deeds of assistance. The closest Gaheries comes to his brothers' conduct with ladies is when he champions the cause of Brandelis, a knight who found himself in difficulties after treating a damsel in a manner akin to that of Guerehes and Agravant. Brandelis had made advances to another knight's lady. The lady had succumbed, but her lover returned. Brandelis killed him, but had to be rescued by Gaheries from the revenge sought by the lover's relatives (II,190,20f.). It should be noted, though, that Gaheries is innocent of Brandelis' actions when he goes to his rescue. However, as I shall demonstrate in the next section of this chapter, this adventure acquires very negative

implications by comparison with a parallel episode which Bohort experiences in the Gral-Queste.

The delineation of Lyonel, Bohort, Hestor, Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries as an amplification, both negative and positive, of the natures of Lancelot and Gawan serves also to underline that comparison and contrast drawn between these two central protagonists which is fundamental to the structure of the Prose Lancelot. In the most general sense, all the knights in the Prose Lancelot form a comparison, and in many cases also a contrast, with each other, for they share a common identity and a common mode of existence as knights; they embark on the same or similar quests and the adventures they experience have many factors in common. This implicit general comparison and contrast is made specific and explicit through clear parallels that are drawn in a number of adventures which Lancelot, Gawan and their kin undergo. I have already touched upon some parallels and contrasts between the houses of Ban and Artus, but I now propose to examine in detail those contrastive incidents which I consider to be the most revealing in the portrayal of the two dynasties.

PARALLELS AND CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE TWO KIN GROUPS

Lancelot, Gawan and their kin in the service of ladies

Lancelot's kin differ markedly from Gawan's brothers in their attitude towards women. This is made evident through the kind of adventures they experience and their response to them.

A number of Hestor's adventures accord with the portrayal of his own nature as a lover, for they are concerned with the succouring of damsels who find themselves in difficulties because of a complication in a love relationship, e.g. the Sinados of Windisore episode (I,372,21ff.), and the Alene one Glichen episode (I,436,32ff.). The affinity which I discussed above (p.177ff.) between Lancelot and Hestor as lovers is further strengthened by their experience of similar adventures. Lancelot rescues a knight falsely accused of dishonouring another knight's wife (I,190,26ff.); Hestor humbles Gwinans von Bleckenstein who had made a similar false accusation (I,362,30ff.). Hestor formulates his sense of chivalric duty as clearly as does Guerehes in the passage (II,158,7ff.) I quoted above: 'Da sprach Hestor das keyn so arm jungfrau w in der welt werde, bedürfft sie syn, er wolt ir dienen nach syner macht' (I,435,12f.). However, their respective conduct differs greatly. Unlike Guerehes, Hestor is never guilty of compromising the damsels he assists, or indeed of being unfaithful to his own lady. On one occasion the lord of the castle of the Enge Marck offers Hestor his daughter's hand in marriage (I,392,9ff.) for freeing him from the siege his castle was under, and when Hestor refuses this offer, the daughter herself steals to him in the night to try and win him over. Hestor praises her beauty and nobility, but tells her that he will not be deflected from his quest for Gawan (I,393,3ff.). This incident forms a stark contrast to the episode where the only way a damsel could escape Guerehes was to flee into a convent (II,179,19ff.).

The offer of marriage made to Hestor finds a parallel in the offer King Brandemagus makes of his daughter to Bohort for his outstanding performance at his tournament (II,74,13ff.). Bohort praises King Brandemagus' daughter, using the same vocabulary (II,74,16f.) as Hestor did in his rejection of the lord of the Enge Marck's daughter (I,393,4), but, again like Hestor, he will not be deflected from the chivalric course he has set out on. Bohort's rejection throws the daughter into despair. However, an old nurse tricks Bohort with a magic ring into making love to King Brandemagus' daughter (II,77,11ff.). This episode remains Bohort's sole amorous involvement. Like Hestor, he never compromises any of the many damsels whom he succours. It is the accepted duty of all knights to go to the aid of damsels in distress, but it is noteworthy that the occurrence of this kind of adventure is more frequent amongst Bohort's adventures than amongst those of any other knight in the Prose Lancelot, for example in the adventures concerning King Valadon's daughter (II,63,2ff.), the damsel of Glocedun (II,81,18ff.), Marans and Laudume (II,614,11f.). Many of the causes which he champions on behalf of damsels are based on instances of disinheritance, for example the two sisters of Hongrefort (II,41,29ff.), the damsel of Galnoie (II,342,9ff.) and a damsel who remains anonymous (II,355,15ff.). In all these adventures Bohort is concerned to uphold justice. He acts in accordance with those guidelines which the Lady of the Lake set down in her formal discourse to Lancelot on the functions and duties of a knight (I,120,12ff.) and which are reiterated in summary, when Bandemagus swears the oath which admits him to the

fellowship of the Round Table: 'Er det den eydt als die andern getan hatten, das er nûmmer witwen noch weisen noch arm lût enterben solt lassen, sunder yne beholffen und beraten syn nach allen sym vermögen.' (II,442,3ff.). The consistency in the pattern of Bohort's exemplary chivalric behaviour is verified in the Gral-Queste, where again he becomes involved in rectifying a matter of disinheritance. After he has successfully championed the cause of a damsel against her rival's knight, Priaden der Schwarcze, Bohort is given an allegorical interpretation of the religious implications of what for him had become a standard kind of adventure:

Umb synen willen (Jesus Christ's) was es da ir es det der jungfrauen. Wann by ir sollen wir verstan die heilige kirche, die da die heiligen cristenheit beheltet in yren rechten truwen, die da ist das ertrich und die susse herberg unsers herren Jhesu Cristi. Umb die ander frauwe, die da enterbet was und sie kriegt mit der andern, das ist die alt ee, der vint, der da alwegen krieget wiedder die heiligen kirchen und wiedder den heiligen glauben. (III,252,9ff.).

Only two of Lyonel's adventures involve him with damsels, but both of these reflect to a limited extent the pattern observed in Hestor's and Bohort's adventures. The first incident recounts Lyonel's unsuccessful attempt to rescue a damsel who was being abducted (II,262,3ff.). In the second incident Lyonel is so preoccupied by his concern for Bohort's and Lancelot's welfare that he is unaware of the love a damsel offers him (II,494,15ff.). She feels insulted and takes her revenge by claiming that he had made advances to her. Lyonel finds himself bound to defend himself against an unjust charge of verretery.

As the Lancelot proper progresses, then, a clear contrast emerges between Lancelot's kin and Gawan's brothers, in particular Guerehes and Agravant, in adventures concerning women. Whereas Guerehes and Agravant were guilty of compromising damsels they met in the course of their adventures, Hestor and Bohort observe the chivalric code in their deeds of assistance to damsels. While the favour of Hestor, Bohort, and Lyonel is sought by the damsels they encounter, Agravant and Guerehes are repulsed by them.

One of the conclusions Keith Busby draws about the portrayal of Gauvain in the Old French romances is that Gauvain does not attain the status of hero because of his lack of singleminded commitment:

Gauvain's imperfect qualifications as a questing knight are not the only features which prevent him from attaining the status of a hero, for he also seems to lack that sense of commitment which is also a prerequisite. This commitment, often to love, or, in the later romances, to God, provides the hero with a constant guide and source of inspiration on his quest. (63)

In the Prose Lancelot Lancelot clearly demonstrates the power of singleminded commitment, for he finds the inspiration for his greatest deeds in his absolute devotion to Ginover (II,439,4ff.). Lancelot and Gawan are contrasted in their identity as knights in the service of Queen Ginover. In the course of the Trilogy the safety of the Queen is endangered on four occasions, and each time both Lancelot and Gawan are concerned with her defence. The difference in attitude between Lancelot and Gawan is brought increasingly sharply into focus with each successive occasion:

1) In the 'false Queen' episode Gawan immediately springs to Ginover's defence, when she is accused of being an impostor (I,497,12ff.). However, his defence of her is frustrated out of a sense of propriety. Bertelac is considered to be too old to be a worthy opponent for Gawan, and thus any combat between them would diminish the latter's public renown, his ere (I,497,34ff.). When Artus eventually decides that the false Queen's claim to the throne is just, Gawan accepts the King's decision passively (I,525,14f.). Lancelot, however, renounces his membership of the Round Table (I,526,3ff.) and claims the trial by combat for himself, offering to fight three knights to prove his lady's innocence, all of whom he defeats in due course.

2) When the Queen is abducted by Meleagant and taken off to the Kingdom of Gorre, both Lancelot and Gawan set out to rescue her. In this episode Gawan's concern with his ere becomes more pronounced. In order to be brought to the Queen, Lancelot is prepared to forego all his ere by sitting in a cart, an ignominious mode of transport in the eyes of the public, whereas Gawan places his ere first, as the dwarf comments: "'Ich höre wol", sprach der geczwerg, "das du din ere lieber hast dann disser stinckende ritter, der off dem karch lytt, umb das ich yn thū die konigin sehen.'" (I,604,34ff.)

3) In the Tod des König Artus Gawan's unwillingness to compromise his ere is most emphatically expressed in the significant 'poisoned fruit' episode. One day at court during a meal the Queen innocently offers Garheiss von Tharahen some poisoned fruit, causing his death. When Garheiss' brother,

Mador von der Porczen, arrives at court and learns what has happened, he decides to avenge his brother. The Queen is in need of a champion. Artus turns to Gawan, but Gawan is resolute in his refusal to defend the Queen, asserting that he could not do so mit eren, for he had witnessed the event (III,522,2ff.).

When Lancelot, who is absent from court, hears of the Queen's plight, he does not hesitate to go to her defence, even though he is fully aware of the difficulty of proving the Queen's innocence (III,517,7ff.). He gives as his reason for defending the Queen all the honour she has bestowed on him: "Wann es ist ein frauwe die mir me eren hat gethan sitherre das ich von erst wapen begunde zu furen ... " (III,517,5ff.).

4) On the last occasion when the Queen is endangered, the theme of ere as the moderating factor in Gawan's behaviour is given a different twist. When Artus sentences the Queen to death for her adultery with Lancelot, Gawan declares himself ready to renounce his fief from Artus (III,551,15f.), just as Lancelot had given up his service of the King in renouncing his membership of the Round Table during the 'false Queen' episode (III,526,3ff.). What motivates Gawan is all the ere which the Queen has bestowed on him and here Lancelot's expression of loyalty to the Queen in the 'poisoned fruit' episode is echoed: 'wann in keyn wise mocht er die betrubkeit gesehen das er sehe sterben die frauwe die im die gröst ere hatt gethan von der welt alle zyt' (III,551,13f.). Gawan's threat to renounce his fief on the Queen's behalf is a great gesture, but it remains a gesture. For no stated reason he disappears from the action at this point and events overtake his offer. Again it is Lancelot who saves the Queen.

The involvement of Lancelot and Gawan in each of the above incidents invites a comparison of their attitude and their success. The comparison is, of course, not altogether a fair one, because the premisses on which their respective service is founded are radically different. Gawan serves the Queen as Artus' nephew and vassal, where Lancelot serves her because of his love for her. However, the conclusion we are invited to draw is that Gawan's observance of convention and concern for his ere make him the lesser knight, whereas Lancelot's disregard of convention in his absolute devotion to Ginover makes him the better and the more humane knight. Furthermore, it should be noted that in the first three incidents the Queen is an innocent victim. The cumulative effect of these incidents and the involvement of both Lancelot and Gawan in each of them helps to condition our assessment of the final rescue of the Queen, when she has been found guilty of adultery.

The comparison and contrast which emerges from Lancelot's and Gawan's common involvement in the defence of the Queen is developed further through discrete but similar episodes. Gawan's union with the daughter of the King of Norgales (I,408,13ff.) is not only important for what it reveals about Gawan's amorous nature, but also for the parallel it forms within the context of the Lancelot proper both to Bohort's union with King Brandemagus' daughter (II,72,13ff.) and then to Lancelot's with King Pelles' daughter (II,293,13ff.).⁶⁴ The parallelism is established by a formal similarity in the elements of the episodes: in each case the lady is a virgin and an unnamed

daughter of a king; in each case the initiative for the union comes from the lady and it is she who arranges for her chosen lover to be brought to her. However, the significant difference in the episodes is that Gawan is willing and perfectly aware of the situation he enters into, where Lancelot and Bohort are both duped. When they realise what has happened to them, they are extremely distressed, Bohort at having had his chastity compromised and Lancelot at the thought of having been unfaithful to Ginover. For Gawan the encounter with King Norgales' daughter is a happy and non-committal event and has no further relevance for him. However, where Lancelot and Bohort are concerned, there is divine intervention which ensures that the loss of virginity was not in vain, for two great knights Helies (II,80,2ff.) and Galaat (II,296,18ff.) are engendered. Lancelot's fidelity to Ginover is put to a fairer test on two other occasions when he is not duped by magic:

1) When on his way to rescue the Queen from Meleagant in Gorre, Lancelot spends a night in a castle where a damsel coerces him into lying beside her on a bed (I,611,20ff.). He takes no interest in her whatsoever, but he courteously does not turn his back to her. Through this biederbkeit (I,612,7) she recognises that he must indeed be Lancelot and she eventually allows him to go to another bed.

2) The damsel, the sister of a knight called Quaromadans, who undertakes to cure Lancelot of snake poison, falls deeply in love with him. She becomes so distracted that she cannot complete the cure. Lancelot will not compromise his fidelity to the Queen, even to save his life, but eventually the situation

is resolved, when she offers him a promise of constancy in a platonic relationship (II,255,17ff.), a neat reversal of the conventional courtly love relationship! Lancelot is happy to accept her offer.

The contrast which I discussed in the previous chapter between the unchaste behaviour of Artus and the pattern of chastity developed in Lancelot's kin is thus extended further.⁶⁵ The three parallel episodes of unions with kings' daughters in particular prepare us for the spiritual polarisation between Lancelot's and Artus' kin which will occur in the Gral-Queste, where virginity and chastity are valued so highly. Gawan will be condemned out of hand for unkuscheit and hoffart, while Galaat, accompanied by Bohort, will achieve the Grail, and Lancelot himself will make some progress towards spiritual redemption.

Visits to the castle of Corbenic

The degree of success which Gawan, Lancelot and Bohort will have in the Gral-Queste is even more clearly anticipated by another set of three parallel episodes, that is their respective visits to the castle of Corbenic. This time the contrast afforded by the three parallel episodes is made quite explicit, for the narrator compares Lancelot's and Bohort's experiences with Gawan's.

As Lancelot enters Corbenic, he meets the damsel who is imprisoned in a vat of hot water. The narrator reminds us of

how Gawan was unable to release her: 'Er (Lancelot) zog zum end zu als er das geschrey gehort hett and sah das es die frau was die herre Gawan uss der buten nemen wolt, des er nit gethun kund' (II,289,6ff.). Lancelot is able to free her, thus proving himself to be the better knight. In the castle Lancelot witnesses, as did Gawan, the ritual appearance of the white dove with the censer in its beak and the damsel bearing the Grail. Gawan had been more astonished by the beauty of the damsel than by the Grail chalice: 'Aprés regarde la pucele, si se merveille plus assés de sa bialté que del vaissel, kar onques mes ne vit il feme qui de bialté s'apareillast a ceste: si muse a li si durement qu'a autre rien ne pense' (Micha, II,377,12ff.).⁶⁶ Lancelot, too, recognises the damsel's great beauty, but he is not distracted by her in the way Gawan is. Lancelot senses the spiritual significance of the Grail and prays humbly in its presence: 'Er leynt syn hend dargegen zusammen und neygt sich demütlichen mit grosser andacht und inniglichen' (II,293,1f.). Gawan, by contrast, had laughed at the prayers of those around him, seeming to be quite blind to the mystery and significance of what he was witnessing.⁶⁷

While at Corbenic Lancelot does not experience the adventures of the 'abentürlich pallast' as Gawan did, for he is tricked instead into making love to King Pelles' daughter, so that the Grail winner might be born. Bohort visits Corbenic twice, but on the first occasion King Pelles did not want to expose him to the dangers of the 'abentürlich pallast' (II,348,23ff.). However, when Bohort arrives at Corbenic for the second time, he

is intent on experiencing all that Gawan did: 'Furwar', sprach Bohort, '...., so will ich nûmmer von hindann scheiden biss ich ein nacht hieinn gewest sy und gesehe den wunder den herre Gawan gesah da er hie was' (II,626,22f.). The battle of the dragon first with the leopard and then with its own young which Gawan witnessed in the 'abentûrlich pallast' is later explained allegorically to him as the events leading up to King Artus' downfall, i.e. Artus' war against Lancelot and then against his own vassals under the leadership of Morderet. The significance of what Gawan witnesses is limited to the fate of the Arthurian world. By contrast Bohort, in addition to witnessing the same scenes as Gawan, also sees, amongst other things, the agony of King Maihagines (II,633,3ff.) and the lance that drips blood (II,634,13ff.), both of which form a significant part of the adventure of the Grail. The priest-like figure who carries the lance praises Bohort for his spiritual purity and tells him (II,634,19ff.) that he cannot know the meaning of what he has seen till the advent of the Grail knight. He also tells Bohort that Lancelot would have achieved the Grail quest had he 'sich so reyn gehalten' as Bohort had (II,634,25f.). The identification of Ban's kin, rather than Artus', with the achievement of the Grail quest is clearly adumbrated in the Lancelot proper.

In the Gral-Queste Lancelot again visits the castle of Corbenic, and this episode forms a further parallel to the earlier visits in the Lancelot proper by himself, Gawan and Bohort. On this occasion Lancelot is allowed partial knowledge of the Grail. However, where Bohort had implicitly obeyed the voice warning him

not to approach closer to the Grail (II,636,13ff.), Lancelot does not and is consequently punished (III,349,11ff.). Whereas Bohort survived his night in the 'abentürlich pallast' well, Gawan was publicly disgraced at the end of the night by being dumped unceremoniously in a cart (an ironic reminder of his refusal to join Lancelot in the cart in Gorre (I,604,34ff.)) and led out of Corbenic by an old woman (Micha, II,385,14ff.). Lancelot, too, does not survive the night well, for he is found senseless, deprived of all his physical faculties for fourteen days as a punishment for his disobedience.

What emerges from these parallel visits to Corbenic in the Lancelot proper is a clear indication of how these three knights will be assessed in the Gral-Queste. Gawan already demonstrates a complete lack of spiritual insight, while both Lancelot and Bohort show themselves to be spiritually sensitive, even though in Lancelot's case he has already forfeited the Grail adventure through his sinful love for Ginover.

The contrast between Gawan on the one hand and Lancelot and Bohort on the other is explored further through the parallelism and contrast drawn between Bohort and Gaheries.

Bohort and Gaheries

Gaheries is the brother who is closest to Gawan, just as Bohort is the closest of his kin to Lancelot. Gaheries is Gawan's favourite brother and it is his death that unleashes an

implacable desire for revenge in Gawan who had always been moderate in his behaviour. Bohort's devotion to Lancelot is expressed on a number of occasions (e.g. II,222,11f.); the strength of this devotion is made evident in the Gral-Queste, where his love for Lancelot is made part of one of the temptations to which Bohort is subjected as a test of his spiritual virtue (III,245,3ff.). Both Bohort and Gaheries have a keen sense of their role as knights errant, and neither is willing to sacrifice his autonomy as a knight errant when offered a kingship. Thus, Gaheries rejects the offer Artus makes him of his patrimony of Orcanie, stating that he will not rest until the quest for the Grail has been achieved (II,701,13ff.). This is echoed later by Bohort's refusal to accept the kingdom of Gaune from Lancelot, for he is not prepared to interrupt his career as a knight errant: "Herre", sprach Bohort, "wolt ich die ere des konigrichs enpfahen, ir soltens nit gestatten, wann als bald ich konig worden were so must ich ritterschafft ubergeben zu üben, es were ymands oder mirselber lieb oder leyt, und hett des noch zurzyt wenig ere" (II,777,13ff.).

Rather more adventures are recorded for Gaheries than for Guerehes and Agravant, just as considerably more adventures are recorded for Bohort by comparison with Hestor and Lyonel. One of Gaheries' major adventures is in the same mould as that kind of adventure which is characteristic for Bohort, that is it is concerned with seeing that justice is done in an inheritance dispute. A damsel, a vassal of the Lady of Rodestock comes to Artus' court looking for Lancelot to champion her cause against

her brother-in-law, Guidam, who is attempting to appropriate the lands she has inherited from her father (II,184,22ff.). In Lancelot's absence Gaheries volunteers to defend her. Later in the Lancelot proper a very similar incident occurs, when the Lady of Galnoie sends to Artus' court for a champion to defend her in an inheritance dispute against Manasses. In the absence of both Lancelot and Gawan, Bohort is the Lady of Galnoie's next choice (II,224,16ff.). Thus, Bohort and Gaheries act as substitutes for Lancelot and Gawan in legalistic matters of justice; they act in accordance with the Lady of the Lake's definition of the knight's duty to uphold justice (I,120,12ff.). With right on their side in both cases Gaheries and Bohort are successful in defending the interests of their respective ladies.

There is another close parallel in two adventures experienced by Gaheries and Bohort, but this time their response to the situation they find themselves in differs radically. When Gaheries finds himself in a dilemma over whether to go to the aid of a fellow Round Table knight, Brandelis, or of a damsel, who are in need of his assistance simultaneously, he elects to go to the aid of Brandelis first. After he has rescued Brandelis, Gaheries learns why Brandelis was being treated badly by his three captor knights. They were relatives of a knight whom Brandelis had killed in combat, after this knight had discovered Brandelis on the point of making love to his lady, having worn down her resistance to his advances (II,192,7ff.). Brandelis' explanation of his predicament reveals that Gaheries has unwittingly defended an immoral act in going to Brandelis' defence. Furthermore, the

laconic report by the narrator of the death of the damsel (II,193,13ff.) whom Gaheries had abandoned in favour of Brandelis places Gaheries' decision in an even more negative light. Shortly after the incident Gaheries is upbraided by another damsel for his neglect of the damsel in distress. Gaheries justifies his decision to her as follows: 'Wann alle ritter von der tafelründe sint mit eyd und huld verbunden einander zu helffen, in was nöten sie sint das sie sich sehen mögen; und darumb liess ich die jungfrauwe und rant zum ritter, das ich also thun must' (II,202,10ff.). Gaheries has placed his loyalty to the brotherhood of the Round Table before his duty as a knight errant to protect the weak, in this case the damsel.

One of the salient narrative techniques of the Gral-Queste is to relate similar adventures to those found in the Lancelot proper, but to invest them with Christian doctrinal significance, which is regularly explicated through the medium of allegory after the adventure has happened. In the Gral-Queste Bohort is placed in a dilemma which resembles that experienced by Gaheries; only in Bohort's case the dilemma is more acute, for Bohort has to choose between rescuing Lyonel, who is not only a brother knight, but also a brother by kinship, and a damsel in distress (III,239,1ff.). Bohort does not hesitate to go to the aid of the damsel. Shortly afterwards Bohort meets a man much like the other holy men who appear in the Gral-Queste, except that he is dressed in black. He leads Bohort to believe that Lyonel has been killed and gives him a spurious interpretation of his action, castigating him for not having asserted loyalty to his brother above all else

(III,244,19ff.). However, once Bohort has successfully withstood all his temptations, he learns the true meaning of what he has undergone from an abbot:

Wann ir sahent uvern bruder, den die zwen ritter
furten, und sahent die jungfrauwe, die der ritter
fürte. Sie bat uch also sussiclichen, da ir warent
betrogen umb bruderliche trüwe und gebete, und ir
liessent hinden naturliche liebe umb die liebe Jhesu
Cristi, und führt der jungfrauen helffen. Und
liessent uvern bruder in sorgen, wann der, in des
dinst ir uch hett gesaczt, der was in uwer
wege. (III,254,16ff.)

The assurance which Bohort receives about the rectitude of his actions throws into relief the very different choice Gaheries made in the Lancelot proper.

The radically different response of Bohort and Gaheries to a very similar situation serves to underline the strikingly different order of priorities which obtains in the Gral-Queste as compared with the Lancelot proper and the Tod des König Artus, and also to focus our attention once more on the fundamental distinction drawn between Artus' kin and Ban's kin with regard to the quest for the Grail. Success in the Gral-Queste is not to be had by following the code of conduct which prevailed in the Lancelot proper, as Gawan in particular finds out to his cost. In the Gral-Queste, loyalty to the fellowship of the Round Table and even to one's kin must be subordinate to the correct Christian course of action. Gaheries' rigid adherence to the oath of allegiance to fellow Round Table knights reflects in essence the limitations of Gawan's insistence on observing social conventions of honourable conduct. Bohort, on the other hand, demonstrates the same independence from convention as Lancelot did in the Lancelot

proper, and reveals his spiritual virtue in being able to desert his brother in favour of a damsel in distress.⁶⁸

The above parallels and contrasts in adventures experienced by the houses of Ban and Artus demonstrate consistently the superiority of Lancelot's kin over Gawan's in both the secular world of Arthurian chivalry and in the spiritual world of the quest for the Grail.

THE INTERACTION OF THE TWO KIN GROUPS

The theme of fraternal loyalty, which is such an important element in the dilemma Bohort faces in the Gral-Queste, when he must choose whether to rescue his brother or a damsel in distress, is one theme which is fundamental to the thematic structure of the entire Prose Lancelot. Indeed, the theme of fraternal loyalty together with that of Lancelot's adultery with Ginover constitute the two major latent tensions which underlie the events of the Lancelot proper and which eventually erupt in the Tod des König Artus, bringing about the end of the Round Table and Artus' reign. In the final section of this chapter I wish to examine how the theme of fraternal loyalty is developed in the course of the Trilogy and what significance it acquires as the narrative progresses.

The fellowship of the Round Table in the Lancelot proper

Contact between the houses of Ban and Artus is established through two channels: a feudal relationship and

egalitarian membership of the Round Table. The events of the Lancelot proper are encased in a frame of feudal relations.⁶⁹ The romance opens with King Ban, Artus' vassal, being despoiled of his lands by Claudas, King of the Wust Lant, and closes with the conflict between Ban's kin and the usurper Claudas being resolved. However, during the narrative separating these two events the feudal aspect of Lancelot's, Bohort's and Lyonel's relationship with Artus as disinherited sons of his former vassals is given very little prominence. As I pointed out in my discussion of their identity (p.149ff.), occasional reference is made to the fact that Lancelot and his cousins are exiles, but it is not until the war in Flanders that they take any action to reclaim their patrimonies, and even then the primary motivation is an insult to Ginover by Claudas (II,678,1ff.). Even after Claudas has been defeated, Lancelot and his kin avoid entering into a feudal relationship with Artus. Bohort and Hestor are not prepared to interrupt their chivalric careers by assuming responsibility for the kingdoms of Gaune and Bonewig respectively (II,777,8f.), and Lancelot, as we learn more clearly later (III,625,6ff.) is anxious to avoid ever being in a relationship of feudal dependence to Artus.

Thus, although the feudal relationship between the dynasties of Ban and Artus is clearly an important factor in the complex patterning of events in the Lancelot proper, the primary relationship between the two houses is their common membership of the Round Table. The Round Table is an élite community of knights errant, whose *raison d'être*, as explained by the Lady of

the Lake (I,120,3ff.), is to succour those in need, most notably widows and orphans, to protect the Church and to act as agents of justice. In the Lancelot proper, however, the tightly knit community of the Round Table shows itself to be greatly preoccupied with its own reputation and the welfare of its own members. The strength of the allegiance which Round Table knights have to one another is well illustrated by Gaheries' rescue of Brandelis, which I have already discussed above (p. 202f.) The majority of the adventures of the Round Table knights, some of which, but by no means all, conform to the Lady of the Lake's definition of a knight's function (see p. 185ff. above), are grouped in the narrative of the Lancelot proper within ten major quests. Nine of these have as their focus the search for fellow knights. Lancelot is the goal of six quests (I,189,19ff.; (I,255,28ff.; I,310,7ff.; I,589,17ff.; II,122.10ff.⁷⁰; II,786,3ff.), Gawan of two (I,345,16ff.; I,546,17ff.), and a number of Round Table knights who did not return from a quest for Lancelot become the goal of a quest themselves (II,443,8ff.). The only major quest by the Round Table knights which is not for a fellow knight is the one for the Queen, after she has been abducted by Meleagant (I,601,27ff.).⁷¹ As the quests for Lancelot are the most extensive, it is he who forms the major focus of activity for the Round Table. His kin and Gawan's are united in their quests for him as fellow Round Table knights.

Much of the knight errant's activity is carried out incognito. He responds spontaneously to the immediate situation he finds himself in without reference to other ties and

allegiances he may have. This mode of conduct is fraught with danger, for all too easily he can find himself in combat with kin or friends.⁷² For this reason certain safety checks are sometimes included in the conventions of set adventures. Thus, repugnance towards aggression against one's kin is expressly extended to include the fellowship of the Round Table. For example, the adventure of Burg Tartre which Bohort takes upon himself involves him in fighting incognito against all-comers, but a clause is inserted in the terms of the adventure to the effect that he may spare the lives of kin and fellow Round Table knights (II,515,13ff.). This equating of allegiance to the membership of the Round Table with kinship is further expressed through the occasional self-identification of Round Table members as brother knights (e.g. II,492,5; II,799,25).

A distinction is maintained between the feudal structure of Artus' kingdom and his household on the one hand, and the egalitarian Round Table community on the other (e.g. II,101,30ff.; II,428,5ff.; II,792,17ff.). Although the Round Table knights do not do Artus homage for territorial possessions, it is none the less understood that they will support him not only in tournaments, but also in feudal battles against invading foes (e.g. Galahot, the Saxons). Lancelot and his kin offer Artus great support in these tournaments and battles, as well as bestowing great honour on the Round Table through success in their adventures. They, thus, come to be recognised and valued as among the best knights at court. In particular their prowess wins for them the respect and deep affection of Artus, Gawan and

Gaheries. The high point of the emotional attachment which Artus' kin feel for Ban's is reached towards the end of the Lancelot proper in the episode of the war in Flanders: when Lancelot decides he will take up arms against Claudas, he finds immediate and full support from Gawan and Artus (II,682,3ff.; II,682,26ff.), Gawan pledging the services of his brothers also (II,682,7f.). As Meredith Stoehr points out, in the war in Flanders 'the strength of the friendships that bind members of Artus' and Lancelot's families is brought out by the fact that friends on the Arthurian side fill roles played by kinsmen on Claudas' side.'⁷³ Artus has become so fond of Lancelot that at first he will not let him go with the others to meet Claudas, but keeps him with him in Logres. His affection for Lancelot is such that it equals that he has for Gawan (II,220,1ff.), and he could not have loved a son more (II,708,12f.). The emotional attachment which Gawan and Gaheries feel for Lancelot's kin is also expressed in familial terms. Thus, when Hestor is wounded in the course of the war in Flanders, this causes Gawan and Gaheries distress, not merely because Hestor is a brother knight of the Round Table, but also, and more importantly, because Hestor is like a brother by kinship to them (II,741,27ff.). This expression of feeling is returned in the Gral-Queste when Hestor goes to Gawan's aid 'umb des willen das er yn wolt beschütten und mynnen als synen neven' (III,268,14).

The episode of the war in Flanders demonstrates how harmoniously and effectively the idealistic bond of brotherhood in fellowship fostered by the Round Table may be superimposed on

brotherhood by kinship. However, we must contrast this harmony with the latent tension which underlies the patterning of these two relationships and which is revealed in a number of incidents in the course of the Lancelot proper.

Although repugnance towards aggression against one's kin is extended to the fellowship of the Round Table knights, the knight errant's habit of acting incognito in his pursuit of adventure frequently allows the innocent transgression of this taboo. The temporary suspension of constraints through incognito conduct permits knights of the same kin and of the Round Table to fight against one another and thus to establish a hierarchy of prowess in arms. Lancelot and Gawan are continually referred to as the two best knights in the world throughout the Lancelot proper, but there is never any doubt that Lancelot is the superior knight. Thus, when Bohort and Agravant, in mutual ignorance of their identity, come to blows over whether Lancelot or Gawan is the better knight, Bohort is the victor (II,68,29ff.).

The knight errant's habit of acting incognito in his pursuit of adventure is frequently extended to his participation in the sporting activity of the tournaments. This enables the knights of the Round Table to test their mettle against their fellow knights, should they so wish (e.g. I,217,7ff.). However, even though this practice is generally accepted as legitimate, Gawan and Gaheries are uneasy about meeting Lancelot and his kin in combat.⁷⁴ In the tournament between Artus and the King from Uber den Marcken and his ally, the King with the Hundred Knights, Lancelot, incognito as a knight in white armour, acquits himself

well, so well that Gawan and Gaheries, who are observing rather than participating in the action, are anxious about the welfare of their brothers. Gawan and Gaheries treat Lancelot as they would their own kin, not on this occasion because he is a fellow Round Table knight, or through affection, but rather as a means of self-defence. Gaheries seeks to prevent Agravant and Guerehes from fighting against Lancelot by invoking the bond of kinship and pretending that Lancelot is their relative (I,217,15). However, Agravant, wilful and aggressive as ever, does not heed Gaheries, but jousts against Lancelot who unhorses him in self-defence. This reluctance on the part of Gawan and Gaheries to meet Lancelot in combat, even within the sporting context of a tournament, is repeated at the beginning of the Tod des König Artus, in the tournament held at Gintiestre. On this occasion they do not participate for fear that they might jeopardise their relationship with Lancelot: 'Und herre Gawin trug des tages keyn wapen und auch syn bruder Gaharies, wann er wüst wol das Lanczelot da sin solt, und er enwolt nit das sie zu hauff kemen, darumb das er forcht das hass und zorn under yn off stund' (III,403,5ff.). Their concern here forms an ironic contrast to Gawan's later desire to avenge his brother on Lancelot at all costs.

Lancelot, too, is anxious not to find himself in conflict with Gawan and his brothers. Thus, he is generally greatly distressed whenever he discovers that his opponents in an incognito combat were of Artus' kin (e.g. II,259,23ff.; II,652,19ff.).⁷⁵ Lancelot has already learnt in the Lancelot

proper from a holy man about Morderet's future treacherous deeds against Arthur. However, although he is horrified, Lancelot takes no action 'durch hern Gawans willen' (II,601,22), presumably because he is afraid of starting a blood feud with his friend.

The trigger for the fatal conflict which arises between the houses of Ban and Artus in the Tod des König Artus is anticipated in the Lancelot proper, for the same interaction between Gawan and Gaheries on the one hand, and Agravant and Guerehes on the other in the tournament between Artus and the King from Uber den Marcken is repeated in the scene where they discuss Lancelot's adultery with the Queen (III,531,10ff.). Gawan and Gaheries do not want to provoke a conflict with Ban's kin, fearing the consequences that would be likely to ensue (III,532,10ff.), and thus will not discuss with the King the possibility of Lancelot's adultery. However, Agravant and Guerehes, together with Morderet, do not observe such restraint and alert the King to the Queen's infidelity with Lancelot. In doing so they set in train the sequence of events which will destroy Artus and the Round Table.

Similarly, the unwitting killing of Gaheries by Lancelot is foreshadowed in the Lancelot proper. In an episode involving the Duke of Calles, who finds himself fighting against his six sons over the inheritance of his lands (II,207,13ff.), Lancelot and Lyonel are ranged against Gawan's brothers, both parties being ignorant of the other's identity. Lancelot injures Gaheries, as he will do so fatally in the Tod des König Artus. On the discovery of his opponent's identity Lancelot is greatly

distressed, just as he will be, only even more so, when he realises he has slain his friend (III,558,7f.). A further foreshadowing of final events occurs in a tournament held at Kamalot between King Bandemagus and Artus (II,420,16ff.). Lancelot and Bohort assist King Bandemagus against Artus at the behest of the Queen, who wishes to humble the Round Table for disparaging remarks made about Lancelot's ability by Yders (II,418,16ff.). Incognito, Lancelot and Bohort unhorse Gawan and Gaheries respectively. This sporting victory and the Queen's involvement foreshadows the outcome of the blood feud between the houses of Ban and Artus which results from Lancelot's accidental slaying of Gaheries in his rescue of the Queen.

In her study of feudal chivalry in the Lancelot proper Cynthia Caples commented on the use of the narrative technique of developing a theme by analogy. She observed how many of the incidental episodes (i.e. the independent episodes which occur as the adventures of the Round Table knights within the course of the main narrative action) were concerned with issues of central importance to the romance, namely adultery and disinheritance.⁷⁶ Another such issue is the strength of the blood tie. There are numerous examples in the course of the adventures in the Lancelot proper of kin avenging kin, and in particular of brother avenging brother. For example:⁷⁷

1) While Lancelot is having a meal with a knight who has offered him hospitality a knight in red armour interrupts and carries off the host's brother (II,95,22ff.). Lancelot rushes to his defence. Once he has successfully rescued the brother

he learns the cause for the Red Knight's aggressive behaviour. The Red Knight was apparently avenging the death of his own brother (II,98,18ff.).

2) The brother of Carados of the Jemerliche Thorn conceives a great hatred for Lancelot after he had killed Carados (II,456,21ff.). As a consequence of this Lancelot's kin are made to suffer for Carados' death.

3) Lyonel finds himself bound to defend himself against Maraban, King Vagor's son, for having killed his brother (II,495,9ff.).

Caples concludes from her analysis of the incidental episodes concerned with adultery and disinheritance that they form a commentary on and elaboration of some of the main events of the Lancelot proper:

Far from being a welter of sensational anecdote, the incidental episodes of the Lancelot propre are an important expressive device, used with considerable sophistication to draw attention to the central issues of the work and to develop them in parallel with the progress of the plot. (78)

In a similar fashion those adventures which demonstrate brothers avenging brothers serve as a constant reminder of the strength of that fraternal loyalty which will eventually divide the houses of Ban and Artus. It is significant, too, that the majority of adventures which involve the theme of brothers avenging brothers is experienced by Lancelot and his kin. Within the context of the entire Prose Lancelot the cumulative effect of these incidental episodes helps to intensify the impact and consequences of the killing of Gawan's brothers by Lancelot and Bohort in the Tod des König Artus.

The theme of fraternal loyalty in the Gral-Queste

In the course of the Prose Lancelot much information is imparted about the origins, history, function and conventions of the Round Table. During the 'false Queen' episode we learn that the Round Table and the community of knights associated with it formed part of Ginover's dowry to Artus (I,495,35ff.). Later in the Lancelot proper Ginover laments the fact that her relationship with Lancelot has deprived him of the Grail adventure, and she comments in passing that the Round Table was established for the express purpose of completing the adventure of the Grail (II,439,13ff.). This remark of the Queen is elaborated in the Gral-Queste, when it is explained to Parzival by an anchoress, his aunt, that the Round Table was made in the likeness of two other tables - the table of the Grail community at the time of Joseph of Arimathea (III,98,9ff) and the prototype table at which Christ sat with his Apostles (III,97,20ff.). She tells Parzifal that the community of Apostles was a brotherhood of men of like mind and will (III,98,2ff.). Although it is not explicitly stated, we are led to assume that the fellowship of the Round Table was founded on the same principle of brotherhood. Indeed, the references by knights of the Round Table to each other as 'bruder' and 'gesellen' are more frequent than they were in the Lancelot proper (e.g. III,33,13; III,104,8; III,210,2; III,373,11). The anchoress further informs Parzifal that the attraction of the Round Table and its quest for the Grail is so great for knights that 'sie lassent ir vetter und mütter und wyber und kinder, umb gesellen zu sin' (III,101,8f.). In the religious context of the

anchoress's remarks this is no doubt an analogy to that passage in the Gospel according to St. Luke where Christ speaks of leaving 'house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake'.⁷⁹

Although the knights who search for the Grail are united by their membership of the Round Table, they are portrayed essentially as individuals engaged in a spiritual quest. What is interesting to the romancer of the Gral-Queste is 'the vertical relationship of man with God, rather than the horizontal one of man with man.'⁸⁰ As a consequence of this emphasis on man's relationship with God all other ties are seen to be of secondary importance in the quest for the Grail. This is clearly illustrated by that parallel adventure to Gaheries' rescue of his fellow Round Table knight Brandelis, that is where Bohort has to choose whether to go to the aid of his brother or the damsel in distress (see p.203f. above). In the terms of the Gral-Queste Bohort makes the right decision in abandoning his brother and going to the aid of the damsel (III,254,16ff.). The theme of fraternal loyalty is pursued further as a result of this episode. Shortly after an abbot has reassured Bohort about his decision, Bohort discovers to his great joy that Lyonel is still alive. His joy, however, is not shared by Lyonel, who gives full rein to his capacity for immoderate anger and attacks Bohort for his preference of the damsel over himself. It is only the intervention of God which prevents fratricide taking place (III,262,17ff.). We are left in no doubt as to the magnitude and implications of the potential fratricide, for an account of Cain's slaying of Abel is included in the legend of

the Tree of Life which follows shortly after Lyonel's attack on Bohort (III,297,12ff.).

The dangers which were inherent in the incognito fighting of knights errant in the Lancelot proper are fully realised in the Gral-Queste. By the end of this romance Gawan, much to his own distress, is responsible for the death of no less than eighteen brother knights of the Round Table (III,389,6ff.), including his particular friends Ywan Livoltres and Bandemagus. In the Lancelot proper such misadventure with one's kin or friends was frequently averted by good fortune, e.g. the recognition of an opponent's sword in the nick of time. If injuries were sustained they were certainly not fatal. In the Gral-Queste, however, such happy chances no longer occur, and the logical outcome of the knight errant's blind aggression results, Round Table knight slays his brother Round Table knight.

The theme of fraternal loyalty is, then, most certainly explored in the Gral-Queste, but within a very different context to that of the Lancelot proper. Within the religious framework of the Gral-Queste love of one's brother must be subordinate to one's love of God, the taboo about aggression against one's kin is expressed through the story of Cain and Abel, and the foolishness of the knight errant's blind aggression is demonstrated through Gawan's slaying of his own friends.

The polarisation of the houses of Ban and Artus in the Tod des König Artus

The achievement of the Grail means the loss of the

function of the Round Table. The member knights are no longer occupied and united by a common goal, and thus their identity is no longer determined primarily by their association with the Round Table, but rather by their kinship. The identification of Lancelot's and Gawan's kin as Ban's geschlecht and Artus' geschlecht respectively from the very beginning of the Tod des König Artus signals the emphasis which is placed increasingly on the tie of kinship as the romance progresses. The individual interest of Lyonel, Bohort and Hestor on the one hand, and Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries on the other recedes, for the concentration and economy of the narrative of the Tod des König Artus is such that their importance is to be found solely in their identification with Lancelot and Gawan.

The lack of adventures obliges Artus to call for tournaments to keep his knights in practice. Three are held in the early stages of the Tod des König Artus - at Gintiestre, at Thoneburg in Norgales and at Kamalot. In all three contests members of Ban's geschlecht are pitted against the Round Table. The superior fighting prowess which they demonstrate is consistent with their performance throughout the Prose Lancelot, and anticipates their greater strength in the war which Artus and Gawan will wage on Ban's kin. As in the Gral-Queste, the dangers of fighting incognito are realised, and not just in combat against fellow Round Table knights. At Gintiestre Lancelot and his kin ride against one another incognito. Disguised as one of the brothers of Challot, Lancelot meets and unhorses his half-brother Hestor; but Bohort then knocks Lancelot and his horse to the

ground, injuring him badly. Bohort has dealt Lancelot such a severe wound that he is unable to participate in the following two tournaments. Artus is aware that the injured knight is Lancelot and he warns Bohort: "'Nu wissent das ir nye ding getadent das uch me wúrd beruwen als diss, ist es das er stirbet.'" (III,413,1f.). The tragedy is, however, avoided, for Lancelot recovers. None the less, the serious nature of Lancelot's injury, inflicted by a kinsman, alerts us to the very different atmosphere of the Tod des König Artus by comparison with the Lancelot proper.

Within the context of the entire Trilogy those numerous incidental episodes in the Lancelot proper which were concerned with the avenging of brothers culminate in the 'poisoned fruit' episode (see p. 193f. above). This incidental episode is brought right into the centre of the narrative, for it strikes at the heart of Artus' court. The Queen is threatened for having caused, albeit innocently, the death of Garheiss von Tharahren. This episode alerts us to issues which will be central in the sequence of events which lead up to the final catastrophe. It is during their rescue of the Queen from the stake that Bohort and Lancelot slay Gawan's brothers. Here again there are no fortunate chances to prevent the dangers of incognito combat being realised. Lancelot's slaying of Gaheries is as unwitting as the Queen's killing of Garheiss von Tharahren was when she innocently handed him the poisoned fruit. The revenge which Garheiss' brother, Mador von der Porczen insists on prepares us for the force of Gawan's reaction to the death of Gaheries.

The two latent tensions which underlie the events of the Lancelot proper, i.e. Lancelot's adultery with the Queen and loyalty to one's kin, in particular fraternal loyalty, are both brought to the surface in the Tod des König Artus. However, Lancelot's eventual return of the Queen to Artus, for the sake of her honour (III,605,5ff.), leaves the issue of fraternal loyalty at the centre of the action. Gawan's implacable desire for revenge blinds him to all else. Whereas previously Gawan had always considered his various allegiances and his reputation before taking action, here he precipitates the end of the Round Table and Artus' reign through his singleminded pursuit of vengeance. He insists on that blood feud with Lancelot which both he and Lancelot had earlier feared and striven to avoid provoking. Ironically, Mador von der Porczen, who himself had insisted on avenging his brother, is amongst those who attempt to dissuade Artus from entering into battle with Lancelot (III,575,10ff.), arguing that they cannot meet the strength of Ban's kin. Mador's advice casts a further negative light on Gawan's obsessive desire for revenge.

The war between Lancelot and Gawan and their respective kin towards the end of the Tod des König Artus forms a stark and sad contrast to the war in Flanders, towards the end of the Lancelot proper, in which Artus, Gawan and his brothers had offered such magnificent assistance to Lancelot and his kin in their struggle to win back their patrimonies from Claudas. In the war in Flanders the two kin groups had fought as brothers, in the war in the Tod des König Artus Gawan avenges his brothers

on Lancelot and his kin. The noble brotherhood of the Round Table is riven asunder, first by the assertion of feudal obligations in the revelation of Lancelot's adultery and then, most forcefully, by the assertion of the bond of kinship.

CONCLUSION

An examination of the figures of Lancelot, Gawan and their respective kin reveals that kinship is one of the major organising principles of the Prose Lancelot. The constant presence of the houses of Ban and Artus provides structural unity in the diverse events of the vast Trilogy. This structural principle is furthermore a thematic one, for the Prose Lancelot, in its broadest terms, is about the impact of Ban's lineage with its Grail connections on the world of Arthurian chivalry.

The contrast between the houses of Ban and Artus is achieved primarily by concentrating on Lancelot and Gawan as the central protagonists, and around them their kin are grouped and balanced. A brief look at the history of Arthurian literature reveals how original and significant the concept of grouping kin round Lancelot and Gawan is. Although Gawan's brothers appear in earlier romances, they receive little prominence until the Prose Lancelot, and Lancelot's half-brother and cousins are virtually unknown figures before the Trilogy. Lyonel, Bohort, Hestor, Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries have their own distinct profiles, but their primary function is to amplify, illuminate and explore further the temperament and nature of Lancelot and

Gawan. The comparison and contrast which is drawn between Lancelot and Gawan throughout the Trilogy is extended by a series of parallel adventures which their respective kin experience. In particular, adventures which reveal the attitude of the two kin groups to the service of ladies and their success in the quest for the Grail are contrasted.

Contact between the houses of Ban and Artus is established through two channels, a feudal relationship and non-hierarchical membership of the Round Table. It is the latter tie which is of the greatest significance. The ideal of a fellowship of brother knights which the Round Table community fosters is superimposed upon allegiances according to kinship. In the Lancelot proper Lancelot and his kin win the respect and admiration of Artus, Gawan and Gaheries, becoming as dear to them as their own kin. However, underlying these harmonious relations are two issues which build up latent tension between the houses of Ban and Artus, that is Lancelot's adultery with the Queen and the strength of loyalty towards kindred, in particular fraternal loyalty. In the course of the narrative the concept of brotherhood becomes a structural motif which enables the romancer to explore the meshing of loyalties in different contexts.

In the Lancelot proper the knight errant's habit of acting incognito allows for many situations to arise where Lancelot's kin are ranged against Gawan's. Consistently the house of Ban demonstrates its superiority over Artus' house, although good fortune ensures that Lancelot's and Gawan's fears

about a potential blood feud are never realised. The theme of fraternal loyalty is pursued in the Gral-Queste, but within a strict religious context rather than the secular world of Arthurian chivalry. In this romance it is made clear that love of one's brother must be subordinate to love of God. The tensions of the Lancelot proper are brought to the surface in the Tod des König Artus with the public revelation of Lancelot's adultery with the Queen and his unwitting slaying of Gaheries. Gawan insists on that blood feud which both he and Lancelot had feared and which brings the houses of Ban and Artus into open conflict, thereby wrecking the noble concept of the brotherhood of the Round Table.

Notes to Chapter Three

1. M. Wehrli, 'Strukturprobleme des mittelalterlichen Romans', WW, 10 (1960), 334-45, comments (p. 342) 'Das Wort "Figur" ist, wie schon Robert Petsch ausgeführt hat, geeigneter als etwa "Person" oder "Charakter", da es sich primär um Träger von Spielbewegungen auf dem Schachbrett des Dichters handelt und durch diese Figuren Funktionen erfüllt werden, die über ihr individuelles Bewusstsein hinausgehen.'
2. E. Köhler, Ideal und Wirklichkeit. Studien zur Form der frühen Artus- und Graldichtung (Tübingen, 1956) comments (p. 161): 'Der Roman steht von Anfang an im Zeichen des aufbrechenden Individuums. Der ritterliche Einzelheld des höfischen Romans hat noch nicht typische, sondern exemplarische Bedeutung, seine Verfehlungen treffen daher nicht nur ihn selbst, sondern eine bestimmte (Artuskreis) oder jeweilige (am Ort der 'aventure') Umwelt.'
3. For a discussion of the implications of Morderet's incestuous birth see Ch. 2, p. 108ff.
4. The thumbnail sketches of Gawan and his brothers fall in the lacuna in the MHG Prose Lancelot. See Lancelot, Roman en prose du XIIIe siècle, edited by A. Micha, 9 vols (Paris, 1978-83), II, 408, 4ff.
5. J.D. Bruce, 'Mordred's Incestuous Birth', in Medieval Studies in Memory of Gertrude Schoepperle-Loomis (New York, 1927), pp. 197-208 (pp. 205-06).
6. See Ch. 2, p. 108ff.
7. For line references see the relevant entries in G.D. West, An Index of Proper Names in French Arthurian Verse Romances 1150-1300 (Toronto, 1969).
8. For line references see the relevant entries in G.D. West, An Index of Proper Names in French Arthurian Prose Romances, (Toronto, 1978).

9. See A.W. Thompson, 'Additions to Chrétien's Perceval - Prologues and Continuations', in ALMA, pp. 206-17 (pp. 212-14).
10. See the relevant entries in West, Verse Index and Prose Index. The name Bohort does not appear to be French in origin and occurs for the first time in French literature in the Prose Lancelot. On the derivation of this name see Lot, Etude sur le Lancelot en Prose, second edition (Paris, 1954), pp. 124-26, 206-07 and n. 10; J.D. Bruce, The Evolution of Arthurian Romance, 2 vols (Gloucester, Mass., 1958), I, p. 401, n. 69; J. Frappier, Etude sur la Mort le Roi Artu, roman du XIII siècle, dernière partie du Lancelot en prose, second revised edition (Paris/Geneva, 1961), p. 44, p. 443, n. 1.
11. J. Marx, 'Etude sur les rapports de la 3^e Continuation du Conte du Graal de Chrétien de Troyes avec le cycle du Lancelot en prose en général et la Queste Del Saint Graal en particulier', R, 84 (1963), 451-77 (pp. 457-61).
12. See my introductory chapter, p. 14.
13. C. Cormeau, Wigalois und diu Crône: zwei Kapitel zur Gattungsgeschichte des nachklassischen Aventiureromans, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen, 57 (Munich, 1977), pp. 124ff.
14. For a detailed analysis of the portrayal of Gawain in Old French romances see K. Busby, Gauvain in Old French Literature (Amsterdam, 1980).
15. Hartmann von Eue, Erec, edited by Albert Leitzmann, fifth edition (Tübingen, 1972).
16. Hartmann von Aue, Iwein, edited by G.F. Benecke, K. Lachmann, seventh edition revised by L. Wolff, with a parallel modern German translation and notes by T. Cramer (Berlin, 1968), ll. 6929-48.
17. See Marianne Wynn, 'Parzival and Gawan - Hero and Counterpart', Beitr. (Tübingen), 84 (1962), 142-72. For a detailed

- analysis of the portrayal of the main protagonists see D. Blamires, Characterization and Individuality in Wolfram's 'Parzival' (Cambridge, 1966).
18. On the prevalence of the maternal uncle/nephew relationship in Arthurian romance see Ch. 2, p. 79ff.
 19. See also (I,422,4ff.). Elspeth Kennedy, Lancelot do Lac. The Non-Cyclic Old French Prose romance, 2 vols (Oxford, 1980) notes: 'Gauvain is by tradition ready to give his name if asked. Cf., for example, Perc., 5621-5; 1st. Cont. III, A1664-8; 2nd. Cont., 29320-5, 30681-5, 31062-5.' (II,476.29-31).
 20. Blamires, Characterization and Individuality, pp. 362-63. Busby, Gauvain in Old French Literature, comments similarly (p. 142): 'The qualities - vices and virtues - that Gauvain embodies are those of the Arthurian court and of the courtly ethos in general. He illustrates both its potentials and its limitations, whilst remaining essentially admirable.'
 21. A. Pauphilet, Etudes sur la Queste del Saint Graal, attribuée à Gautier Map (Paris, 1921; reprinted Paris, 1968), p. 127. Grace Savage discusses reasons for Gauvain's failure in her chapter on characterisation in her thesis 'Narrative Technique in the Queste del Saint Graal' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Princeton, 1973), (DAI, A34 (1974), p. 5203).
 22. See n. 4 and Micha, II, 362, 4ff.
 23. See Ch. 2, p. 137 n. 44.
 24. See my introductory chapter, p. 1f.
 25. Elspeth Kennedy, Lancelot do Lac, makes reference in her notes to the text to the use of the Fair Unknown motif in other Arthurian romances (II, n. 24. 14-18 and n. 194. 29-32). See also D. Brewer, 'The Presentation of the Character of Lancelot: Chrétien to Malory', in Arthurian Literature, III, edited by R. Barber (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 26-52 (pp. 26-28).
 26. Ulrich von Zatzikhoven, Lanzelet, edited by K.A. Hahn (Frankfurt, 1845; reprinted with a postscript and bibliography

- by F. Norman, Berlin, 1965).
27. See my introductory chapter, p. 2f.
 28. Similarly in Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan the young hero-knight's nobility is evident to all who encounter him, even when he hides his true identity, as he does in Ireland, pretending to be the son of a merchant. See Gottfried von Strassburg, Tristan, edited by P. Ganz, Deutsche Klassiker des Mittelalters, 4 (Wiesbaden, 1978), ll. 10008-36. It is a convention of the courtly romances that a knight should create his reputation independently. However, it would seem that in the minds of an aristocratic audience it was only appropriate that a person of such noble quality should after all be of royal stock.
 29. See Ch. 2, p. 115ff. for a discussion of the theme of autonomy and self-determination.
 30. At this early stage in the romance the narrative focus is centred on Lancelot. No concern is expressed by Artus or members of his court about the welfare of King Bohort's sons and Lancelot's cousins, Lyonel and Bohort.
 31. The reluctance of a knight to give his name is a fairly common narrative feature in the Arthurian romances, e.g. in Hartmann von Aue's Iwein Iwein identifies himself simply as the 'knight with the lion', while he is busy restoring his reputation (ll. 5496f.). It is too, a convention that in combat a knight only gives his name in acknowledgement of defeat, e.g. Guivreiz in Hartmann von Aue's Erec (ll. 4468ff.).
 32. Amelia A. Rutledge, 'Narrative structures in the Old French Prose Lancelot, (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Yale, 1974), (DAI, A35 (1974/75), p. 2954), comments: 'The thematic structure of the Lancelot is possessed of its own complexities, one of which is the accommodation of an extensive theme in several different contexts by means of carrier motifs' (p. 160). She sees Lancelot as a 'carrier motif' for the theme of 'unfulfilled obligations

- in the specific instance of the usurped kingdoms' (p. 156).
33. I discuss Lancelot's relationship with Artus in Ch. 4, p. 258ff. and p. 282ff.
 34. Cynthia Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry in the Prose Lancelot', (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Harvard, 1970), (DAI, A32 (1971), p. 1505), interprets Ginover's role in the romance as that of a surrogate feudal lord (p. 46 and p. 197).
 35. On the biblical associations attached to the name of Galaat see Pauphilet, Etudes Queste, pp. 135-37. E. Anitchkof, 'Le Galaad du Lancelot-Graal at les Galaads de la Bible', R, 53 (1927), 388-91, sees the influence of the historical philosophy of Joachim of Flore in the significance of the name Galaad; in this connection see Ch. 2, n. 33. On the importance of the name given to Lancelot at his baptism and his relationship with Galaad, the Grail winner, for the evolution of the non-cyclic Prose Lancelot into the Vulgate Cycle see Kennedy, Lancelot do Lac, II, n. 1. 7-9.
 36. For a discussion of the portrayal of Lancelot as the father of Galaat see Ch. 2.
 37. See the prologue to Hartmann's Iwein, ll. 1-20.
 38. Wolfram von Eschenbach is an exception here, for in his romance Parzival the hero-knight has a father, Gahmuret, and twin sons, Kardeiz and Loherangrin, although the latter are only mentioned very briefly at the end.
 39. See Ch. 2, pp. 83ff.
 40. The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances, 7 vols, edited by H.O. Sommer (Washington, 1908-13), I. L'Estoire del Saint Graal, pp.279-81. See also my introductory chapter, p. 8f.
 41. Frappier, Etude Mort Artu, p. 451.
 42. It is interesting that the narrator should stress that Ban and his brother had the same father and mother. Perhaps this stress is intended to alert us to some of the irregularities in birth that are to follow. See Ch. 2 for

a discussion of the pattern of illegitimacy in the Prose Lancelot.

43. Ywan and Gawan are related to the same double degree, but no similar significance is attached to their relationship as exists between Lancelot and his cousins. See Madeleine Blaess, 'Arthur's Sisters', BBIAS, 8 (1956), 69-77.
44. For the significance of the parallel drawn between Helyas and Galaat see Ch. 2, p. 91.
45. For other physical resemblances amongst Lancelot's kin see Ch. 2, p. 91.
46. The oblique case of 'Hectorn' and 'hern Gawan' following 'darnach' is confusing. Kluge offers no help in his apparatus to the text, but the context of this passage, and the OF text confirm the reading that Bohort is the best knight in the absence of Lancelot. See Micha, VI, 8, 3ff.
47. There is an unevenness in the narrative here, for Lyonel is introduced as if for the first time (I, 305, 6ff.). It could be that the romancer was merely refreshing the reader's mind about Lyonel's identity, for he had not appeared in the text since Lancelot left the Lady of the Lake to be knighted at Artus' court.
48. This episode occurs in the lacuna in the MHG Prose Lancelot. See Micha, II, 364, 18ff.
49. I share Frappier's opinion in this respect, Etude Mort Artu,: 'Seule une vue trop générale des défauts et des mérites du corpus a pu permettre à F. Lot d'écrire que le personnage même de Bohort n'est qu'une réplique de celui de Lancelot' (p. 316).
50. Significantly, Bohort's excellence in this combat against Lancelot is matched later by Perceval (II, 825, 11ff.), Galaat's other companion in the Grail quest.
51. In her analysis of how a hierarchy of prowess is established in the Lancelot proper Amelia Rutledge, 'Narrative Structures', notes (p. 144) that, unlike Gawan, Bohort is never captured.

- She further notes (p. 144) that when Lancelot is captured, he either frees himself or is aided by a woman, i.e. he never needs the assistance of a fellow Round Table knight in the way Gawan does.
52. In Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan there is a similar instinctive attraction between Marke and his nephew Tristan on their first meeting, when both are ignorant of each other's identity. (ll. 3238-44).
 53. Elspeth Kennedy, Lancelot do Lac, II, n. 519.10-524.15 notes a series of parallels and contrasts between the relationship of Hestor and his lady, and Persides and Alene one Glichen in the Prose Lancelot on the one hand, and Erec and Enide in Chrétien de Troyes' Erec on the other.
 54. H. Koch, 'Studien zur epischen Struktur des Lancelot-Prosaromans', (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cologne, 1965), p. 79. Koch only considers volume I of Kluge's edition of the Prose Lancelot, but his observations are in general valid for volume II also.
 55. Agravant adopted a similar approach when he attempted on an earlier occasion to alert Artus to Lancelot's relationship with the Queen (II, 392, 8f.).
 56. Helen Blake, 'Etude sur les structures narratives dans La Mort Artu (XIII^e siècle), Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire, 50 (1972), 733-43, comments: 'L'opposition entre les deux couples Gauvain - Gaheriet et Agravains - Guerrehet au niveau sémantique, graphique et phonique du texte met en valeur l'opposition interne du personnage de Gauvain' (p. 739).
 57. See n. 22.
 58. Busby, Gauvain in Old French Literature, p. 394.
 59. The account of Gawan's visit to Corbenic occurs in the lacuna of the German version. See Micha, II, 373-86.
 60. Throughout the Prose Lancelot a contrast is drawn between the chaste nature of Ban's geschlecht and the libidinous nature

- of Artus' geschlecht. See Chapter 2, p. 95f. for reference to Artus' amorous adventures.
61. This lady is a cousin of Lancelot (II, 181, 4ff.)! Guerehes' behaviour towards her and his slaying of her brothers thus contributes to that latent tension between the two kin groups which I discuss later in this chapter. However, the incident concerning Guerehes and Lancelot's cousin is not mentioned again and, thus, does not become an issue between the houses of Ban and Artus.
 62. See n. 4, n. 23 and Micha, II, 410, 10ff.
 63. Busby, Gauvain in Old French Literature, pp. 392-93. Busby's remarks are, of course, only true for those Arthurian romances which follow the classical pattern established by Chrétien de Troyes. Gawan occurs as the main protagonist in works such as Heinrich von dem Türlin's Diu Krône and the Dutch Walewein, which show a degeneration from the classical pattern. In this connection see Maria Bindschedler, 'Die Dichtung um König Artus und seine Ritter', DVjs, 31 (1957), 84-100 (p. 94).
 64. Frappier, Etude Mort Artu (p. 100), uses these three parallel episodes as evidence to support his argument that there was an 'architect' who planned the Trilogy. On this subject see Ch. 1, p. 46f.
 65. See n. 60.
 66. See n. 59.
 67. This detail of Gawan's laughter does not occur in all of the OF MSS. See Micha, II, 376, n. 11d.
 68. For a discussion of this characteristic trait of independence in the portrayal of Ban's kin see Ch. 2, p. 115f.
 69. For a study of the portrayal of feudal relations in the Lancelot proper see Cynthia B. Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry in the Prose Lancelot' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Harvard, 1970), (DAI, A32 (1971), p. 1505).

70. The beginning of this quest falls in the lacuna in the MHG text. See Micha, II,319,6ff.
71. I have followed the structural division of the Lancelot proper into ten major quests as distinguished by Carol Chase, 'The Art of Entrelacement in the 13th.-Century Lancelot', an unpublished paper delivered to the International Arthurian Society Conference held at Glasgow University in August 1981 (22 pp.).
72. For a study of this phenomenon in medieval German literature, including the Prose Lancelot, see W. Harms, Der Kampf mit dem Freund oder Verwandten in der deutschen Literatur bis um 1300, Medium Aevum. Philologische Studien, 1 (Munich, 1963).
73. M.L.P. Stoehr, 'The War in Flanders: Themes and Structure of an Episode in the "Prosa-Lancelot"' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1978), (DAI, A39 (1978), p. 3569), p. 40.
74. In response to Key's complaint that Lancelot had injured him in a tournament Lancelot comments: '"Da von sollent ir mir nit undanck sagen", sprach Lancelot, "wann ich uwer nit enkant, und an solchen enden kent man wedder frunt noch finde ..."' (II,646,12ff.). However, the evaluation of fighting against kin and fellow Round Table knights is dependent on the context of the action as Rudolf Voss, Der Prosa-Lancelot: Eine strukturanalytische und strukturvergleichende Studie auf der Grundlage des deutschen Textes, Deutsche Studien, 12 (Meisenheim am Glan, 1970), points out: 'Neben den Fällen beispielsweise, in denen Lancelot bewusst gegen die Ritter des Königs kämpft, stehen andere, in denen ihm der Kampf mit seinen Gesellen unlieb ist, und dies nicht erst in der Phase des unheilvollen Kriegs in der Mort Artu' (p. 58).
75. Lancelot is, of course, equally distressed whenever he discovers that his incognito opponents are his own kin (e.g. II,32,29ff.).
76. Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry', p. 63 and see Ch. 2, p. 97f.

77. Further examples are: I,396,21ff.; II,32,29ff.; II,63,17ff.;
II,82,16ff.; II,137,1ff.; II,147,4ff.; II,351,15ff.;
II,375,24ff.; II,581,23ff.; II,791,8ff.
78. Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry', p. 75.
79. Luke, 18, 29.
80. Pauline Matarasso, The Redemption of Chivalry. A Study of
the Queste del Saint Graal (Geneva, 1979), p. 161.

CHAPTER FOUR

FRIENDS AND RULERS

In the course of the Lancelot proper four dominant figures of political power emerge - Artus, Galahot, Claudas and Bandemagus. Artus is king of Logres and holds his lands from no one but God, as he proudly declares in answer to an aggressive challenge from Galahot (I,225,15ff.). Claudas and Bandemagus, on the other hand, are vassal kings. Claudas, king of Bohorges (also known as the Wust Lant), holds his lands from the king of Gaune, who in turn was a vassal of Aramunt (I,1,13ff.). Bandemagus, the king of Gorre, is a vassal of Galahot (I,511,8ff.). Galahot, the most powerful political figure, is described as a furst, the landesherre of the Fremden Einlande (I,597,34f.), who, like Artus, holds his lands from no one, but would not be crowned king until he had conquered the world (I,486,28ff.). With the exception of Artus, the appearance of these rulers in the narrative is episodic and limited to the Lancelot proper. Bandemagus, it is true, does set out on the quest for the Grail, but his experiences are not related, and we learn at the beginning of the Tod des König Artus that he was killed through misadventure in the course of the Grail quest by Gawan (III,389,13ff.). Claudas appears consistently in the early stretches of the Lancelot proper (I,1-110), but then has virtually no role to play until the war in Flanders at the very end of the romance (II,704-775). After Claudas has deserted his men in the war, he simply disappears from the narrative. The involvement of Galahot in the romance is even

more concentrated. He enters the narrative when he issues his challenge to Artus (I,225,10ff.), and subsequent to that is more or less continuously present until his death (I,597,26ff.).

Bandemagus has a rather more diffuse role; his main involvement in the action occurs after his son, Meleagant, has abducted the Queen (I,599,10ff.), in a tournament he conducts against the King of Norgales (II,275,19ff.) and when he joins the Round Table after a tournament held at Kamalot (II,398,21ff.).

Although the appearances of Claudas, Galahot and Bandemagus are episodic, they none the less form a particular configuration in the structure of the Prose Lancelot narrative. Artus is the central figure in the configuration, playing as he does an important role in the careers of all the others. Bandemagus has a close relationship with Galahot as his loyal vassal and he supports Lancelot in the war against Claudas, but there is no direct contact between Claudas and Galahot. The configuration of these rulers is achieved less by their actual interaction with one another than by virtue of their social position and, most importantly, by their respective relationships with Lancelot.

The society of the Prose Lancelot is structured according to the ties of kinship and of feudalism. It is primarily through Artus, Galahot, Claudas and Bandemagus that the social implications of the feudal bond and the force of the blood tie are investigated. In addition, it is through their association with Lancelot that the more personal tie of friendship is also explored. In the chapter which follows I wish to examine how friendships are juxtaposed

with feudal and familial relationships in the narrative of the Prose Lancelot, and how friendship as a theme is developed. Although Galahot, Claudas and Bandemagus have no role to play in the Tod des König Artus, I shall demonstrate how many of the major issues of the final romance in the Trilogy are foreshadowed and debated in the Lancelot proper through these figures.

First, I shall establish what structural links are made in the portrayal of Artus, Galahot, Claudas and Bandemagus in the narrative with regard to their social position as rulers.

THE CONFIGURATION OF RULERS

The political ambition of Artus, Galahot, Claudas and Bandemagus

King Artus' name and reputation are used generally as a byword for excellence (e.g. I,30,32ff.; II,68,25f.; II,256,13f.; II,475,10f.; II,653,25f.). His court and country form the focal point of the political geography of the Prose Lancelot. However, the norm and the stability which they represent are repeatedly placed under threat. Artus appears to have no policy of expansion, rather he is shown as struggling throughout to safeguard his position and his lands. The narrator reports that in his early years as king, not only did he have to defend his lands against invasion (I,2,10ff.), but he also had trouble keeping order amongst his own barons (I,29,13ff.). The threat of insurgent vassals re-appears during the 'false Queen' episode. When Artus is absent from his court for so long, his vassals

become restless, some of them wishing to exploit the situation in their own interests (I,519,15ff.). This threat from the barons is realised in the final stretches of the Prose Lancelot, where it becomes one of the many tensions which surface in the Tod des K nig Artus and which contribute to the downfall of Artus. In the course of the Lancelot proper a number of Artus' vassals are oppressed and in need of his assistance (e.g. the Lady of Noaus - I,136,29ff. and the Lady of Galnoie - II,224,1ff.), but not all of them receive it (e.g. the lord of the Enge Marcke - I,377,26ff. and, most notably, Artus' vassal kings, Ban and Bohort - I,4,35ff.). Artus has to deal with several threats of invasion (e.g. the King from Uber den Marcken - I,189,12ff.; Galahot - I,225,15ff.; the Frisians - I,441,28ff.; the Romans - III,690,3ff.). Despite the constant struggles to maintain his power and position, Artus is none the less recognised by Galahot and Claudas alike as the most powerful man in the world (Claudas - I,30,1ff.; Galahot - I,486,22ff.), and as such he becomes the target of their political ambition.¹

The careers of Claudas and Galahot do not coincide, but they are closely linked in the structure of the Lancelot proper as complementary figures. The exceptional nature of both these men is underlined by an account of their physical appearance; this is particularly so in the case of Claudas. Galahot is a very large man, as Galagwentins der Galois informs Artus: 'der sprach, er hett yn gesehen und west wol das er eins halben fusses mere were dann er ye keyn ritter hett gesehen' (I,225,36ff.). Indeed, although he is not himself a giant, Galahot is referred to as the

son of a giantess - 'der schönen Joianden sune' (I,225,13) and 'der schönen Rusinnen sun' (I,597,34) rendering the Old French 'lie fiex a la Bele Jaiande' (Micha, VII,439,21).² The impressive size of Galahot's stature may be interpreted as symbolic of his magnanimous spirit. Jean Frappier comments:

Si physiquement Galehaut paraît n'être après tout qu'un chevalier d'une taille exceptionnelle, il semble que sa démesure, ou plutôt son titanisme, proviennent d'un ingénieux transfert, sur le plan moral, de cette appellation: Le Fils de la Géante. (3)

Claudas, too, is a large man, 'nún fuss lang' (I,26,17). In the Lancelot proper a detailed description of his physiognomy (I,26,18ff.) precedes an analysis of good and bad traits in his character. Neale Carman has noted that the details of Claudas' face conform to the conventional portrait of a repulsive person in literature contemporary with the Prose Lancelot.⁴ The complex and treacherous nature of Claudas is, then, manifested in the contrast between his large, strong body and his rather gruesome face.

Claudas and Galahot share the same ambition, to achieve mastery of the world, and they both realise that the route to this goal lies in conquering Artus and making him their vassal.⁵ However, both men have a sense of proportion about the scale of their ambition, and in moments of considered reflection each refers, using the same vocabulary, to the folly of his dreams and plans - Claudas: 'myn affenlich gedenck' (I,27,31); Galahot: 'die grost affenheit' (I,486,19) and 'myn affenheit' (I,487,16). Both men demonstrate that they are wily statesmen and both are described as wise - Claudas - I,1,14; Galahot - I,483,17f., I,519,30.

Although they share the objective of conquering Artus, the manner in which Claudas and Galahot set about it reveals both the difference in their natures and the strength of the political position which they have managed to attain. It only occurs to Claudas to think of waging war on Artus because Artus had made no effort to win back the lands of his vassals, Ban and Bohort, which Claudas had usurped. Claudas perceives a potential weakness in Artus which he thinks he may be able to exploit. He is pragmatic and devious in his approach, and so he takes the precaution of sizing up his chances of success by going as a spy to Artus' court: 'Sieh ich das er sich nit mag erwern, so wil ich yn bestan zu urlagen' (I,27,29f.).⁶ All that he sees of Artus and the manner in which Artus conducts himself as king impresses him greatly (I,29,22ff.). When he asks the squire he has taken along with him for advice about attacking Artus, the squire impresses upon Claudas his lack of resources and Artus' personal excellence. The squire thinks so highly of Artus that, much to Claudas' annoyance, he would be prepared to warn Artus of any action taken against him (I,30,35ff.). Claudas does not pursue his ambition any further, for, when he returns to Bohorges, he finds himself shortly afterwards deeply embroiled in his own domestic troubles, arising out of his treatment of Lyonel and Bohort. Claudas is recognised as a gut ritter, that is a good fighting knight, both by the honourable knight Phariens (I,67,18) and by the narrator (I,1,13), but his chivalric reputation is vitiated by his treacherous nature (I,1,14).

Galahot adopts a very different approach to the

realisation of his ambition. He has the military strength and personal confidence to issue a direct challenge to Artus (I,225,10ff.). Whereas Claudas is a realist, Galahot is an idealist. Unlike Claudas, Galahot would find it dishonourable to take advantage of a weakness in Artus' position. Thus, when he discovers that Artus cannot match his military might he first sends only a proportionate number of his men into battle (I,236,6ff.) and then he decides to allow Artus a year's grace in which to muster sufficient support. Any other course of action he would not consider consonant with his ere:

'Es ist mir kein ere das ich den konig Artusen also urlagen, er hatt allzu wenig lúte. Gewünne ich im sin lant also abe, es wer mere myn schande dann myn ere.' (I,241,25ff.)

The contrast between Claudas and Galahot is further emphasised by the nature of Galahot's vassal king, Bandemagus. Although Claudas and Bandemagus share the same feudal rank of vassal king, their attitude to political power differs radically. Whereas Claudas is described as a verreter, Bandemagus is a model of loyalty.⁷ When Galahot makes arrangements for the government of his lands while he is at Artus' court with Lancelot, it is Bandemagus who is recommended to him as being the ideal person to appoint as his deputy, for he is a king himself and has all the virtues of a good ruler:

' ... Er ist gut ritter und koniges genoss, er minnet das recht und hasset das unrecht und ist milt und getrüwe und darzu wise. ... ' (I,510,31f.)

Bandemagus' humility is evident in his response to Galahot; he accepts the responsibility as his feudal duty, but feels unworthy of it. He behaves consistently in accordance with his status as

a vassal king, observing faithfully his obligations to his feudal lord:

'Sitt irs zu ernst wollet, herre, so muss ich es thun,
und solt ich alles myn lant darumb verliesen; ich bin
uwer man und mag es uch versagen nit.' (I,511,8ff.)

One of the salient qualities listed above which fits Bandemagus to be a good regent for Galahot in his absence is that he is milt. Miltekeyt is considered one of the essential attributes of a model ruler, and in the Prose Lancelot it provides a point of comparison in the portrayals of Artus, Claudas and Galahot. Although Bandemagus is referred to as a generous king (I,510,32), the theme of miltekeyt as such is not developed through this figure and I have therefore disregarded him in the following section.

The miltekeyt of Artus, Claudas and Galahot

Within the complex society of the Prose Lancelot various ranks of the feudal hierarchy are represented (e.g. dukes, counts, barons), but the most effective social distinction is the broad one made between kings and knights. The Lady of the Lake's discourse on the origin and purpose of chivalry (I,120,3ff.), together with the interpretative commentaries of the holy men in the Gral-Queste, provide a theoretical framework for the welter of adventures experienced by the knights errant in the first two romances of the Prose Lancelot. Elspeth Kennedy has drawn attention to the many parallels to be found between the details of the Lady of the Lake's discourse and non-fictional treatises on

chivalry by such men as John of Salisbury, Etienne de Fougère and Alanus^{de} Insulis.⁸ The Lady of the Lake's discourse and the commentaries of the hermits conform to the general consensus of opinion amongst such writers that the primary function of chivalry was to protect the weak and the Church.

Some theory is also provided about the art of kingship in the Prose Lancelot by the sage who interprets Artus' premonitory dreams, rebuking and advising him about his manner of ruling (I,242,7ff.). Again, Elspeth Kennedy has been able to demonstrate that the sage's advice broadly reflects the political theory of kingship current in the thirteenth century.⁹ The sage instructs Artus that his royal authority is by the grace of God (I,242,9f.), that he must protect the weak and enforce justice (I,242,11ff.). Amongst the historical examples of perfect knights whom the Lady of the Lake cites to Lancelot (I,123,16ff.) nearly all were kings, and thus in the divine order of things as outlined by the sage it emerges that the most fundamental responsibilities of knights and kings in society are the same, namely to protect the poor, the weak and the Church, and to see that justice is done.¹⁰ However, the responsibility which the sage discusses at greatest length with Artus is one which falls primarily to a king, that is the exercise of miltekeyt, largesse or generosity (I,245,26ff.).¹¹

We first learn of Claudas' attitude to the exercise of miltekeyt through reference to his relationship with his son Dorins:

Er was geheissen Dorins und was so milt und darzu so stolcz das yne syn vatter nit getorst ritter machen, wann er forcht, wurd er des lands gewaltig, das er yn vertrieb mit syner miltikeyt; was er mocht gewinnen das gab er alles hinweg. Claudas der was aber genöt und gyrig nach güt allewege, er engab nymand nicht dann als er urlagen wolt. (I,26,11ff.)

Claudas' understanding of miltekeyt is, however, radically altered through his visit to Artus' court as a spy. There he and the squire who accompanies him observe Artus' largesse (I,29,24f.) and how this contributes significantly to his success (I,30,7ff.). Indeed, generosity is one of Artus' most salient qualities, as King Ban's godson, Banin, tells Artus:

Du gezems wol din ritter rich zu machen und thust yn gross ere. Du bist milt und gut, me dann ye kein konig wart, beide gegen got und gegen der welt.
(I,47,22ff.)

Claudas returns to Bohorges proclaiming how he has revised his attitude to the exercise of largesse since seeing Artus' example (I,33,26ff.). He overcomes his old fear and invests Dorins as a knight using the occasion to lavish gifts on his subjects (I,51,2ff.). When Dorins is slain immediately after his investiture, Claudas is distraught. He laments at length his son's untimely death, for he recognised in him those virtues which would have made him the equal of Artus (I,63,13f.). In the catalogue of virtues he attributes to Dorins he expatiates most on the virtue of miltekeyt and the success that accrues to the man who is generous (I,62,5ff.).

Despite the praise accorded to Artus on account of his largesse by Claudas and others, it is on this aspect of a king's duty that the sage attacks Artus most severely. He accuses Artus of not being just in the distribution of his gifts. As the

upholding of justice is considered to be the most essential responsibility of a ruler, Artus' fault is grievous (I,242,12ff.). In answer to Artus' premonitory dreams about the loss of his lands and position, the sage warns Artus about the folly of neglecting his landless knights in favour of his landed vassals, for the latter are ambitious: "' ... nochdann sollen sie dinen dot lieber han dann din leben. ... '" (I,244,20).¹² He proceeds to give Artus detailed instructions about how he should tailor his munificence to suit the particular needs and rank of the knights in his realm, so that he may be sure of the support of all his subjects (I,245,9 - 247,17). The sage's final words on the subject to Artus echo those quoted above (I,26,11ff.) which expressed Claudas' original fears about being driven from his lands through Dorins' miltekeyt, but their import is quite different:

' ... Man hatt wenig gefreist das ye milt konig vertrieben wurde von syner miltikeit. Man hat dick gefreischt das gitig konig vertriben sint. ... '
(I,247,8ff.)

This verbal echo highlights the discrepancy between the ideal of miltekeyt and how it is practised, not only by Claudas, but also by Artus, whose exercise of largesse Claudas had admired. It would seem that Artus takes the sage's words to heart, for there is subsequent mention in passing of how he followed the advice given him (I,260,10ff.). However, after that the theme of miltekeyt is not explicitly developed further through Artus.

Claudas' limited and corrupt comprehension of the true purpose of largesse is demonstrated clearly in the war in Flanders. When the battle against Lancelot starts, Claudas is acutely aware

of the weakness of his position as the usurper of the patrimonies of Lancelot and of Lancelot's cousins. In an attempt to secure his position, he bids all those men who do not feel they can support him loyally to leave (II,691,15ff.). Those who remain he showers with gifts to strengthen their loyalty (II,693,8ff.). However, these measures avail him little against the support based on friendship and gratitude which is given to Lancelot.¹³ The abuse which Claudas makes of miltekeyt is reiterated in the Tod des König Artus. The premonitions of Artus' dreams in the Lancelot proper come true when Morderet raises an army against him. Within the structure of the entire Prose Lancelot Morderet functions as a parallel to Claudas, both in his treacherous nature and in his political ambition.¹⁴ In his war against Artus Morderet employs the same tactics as Claudas did in the war in Flanders. He wins support against Artus amongst Artus' own men through a display of great generosity (III,638,7ff.; III,703,6ff.), although, like Claudas, he is uneasy about the wrongness of his actions. The truth of the sage's advice on how to distribute gifts justly and wisely is demonstrated to Artus with a vengeance in the Tod des König Artus. It is the very men, the landed vassals, of whose greedy ambition the sage had warned Artus, who accept Morderet's bribes of largesse.

Like Artus, Galahot is recognised as being generous (I,226,1ff.), and we are told that he is a popular ruler. The warmth of the welcome he receives on returning to his country after a period of absence (I,489,20ff.) contrasts with the dismay and unhappiness of Claudas' subjects when Claudas returns to

Bohorges from Logres (I,33,22f.). Another element in the structural parallel which is established between Galahot and Artus in the Lancelot proper are the premonitory dreams which both men have. The parallel is emphasised by the fact that Galahot sends to Artus' court for wise men to interpret his dream. The revelation of these wise men to Galahot that his dream betokens his imminent death prompts Galahot to behave as a model ruler. He puts his affairs in order, redresses old wrongs, and does 'alles das er wüst das siner sele gut was' (I,544,28f.). The measures he takes conform to what the Lady of the Lake described as being the true purpose of chivalry (I,122,8ff.) and which the sage accused Artus of neglecting:

Da sie zu Sorelois qwamen, Galahut det me almusen und gutes dann er bi sinem leben gethan hett: er cleite arme lút und schucht sie, er halff witwen und weisen und macht arme gotteshuser rich, er dete alles unrecht gelt ab in sim lande, ... (I,544,23ff.)

This fulfilment of his duty as ruler earns him the highest praise from the narrator on his death:

Da verschied Galahut, der edelst landesherre der von des konig Salomons ziten ie geborn wart; wann das gut das er vor sim tode saczt und det, das gedet nie kein furst me. (I,597,26ff.) (15)

Galahot's conduct as a ruler in the last years of his life is thus presented as exemplary and it is matched by no other figure in the Trilogy.

THE FEUDAL BOND

The contrast which exists between the figures of Galahot and Claudas is not exhausted by their respective attitudes to

political ambition, nor by their exercise of miltekeyt, for through each of them a different kind of relationship is explored - in Claudas' case the feudal relationship between lord and vassal, and in Galahot's friendship between men who esteem one another. The sequences of narrative in which Claudas and Galahot appear are less subject to the constant interruption of the interlacing technique.¹⁶ This allows the prose romancer to make a detailed study of both men in the context of those relationships which are particular to them. Although Galahot and Claudas disappear from the narrative in the Lancelot proper, the issues which are raised in the portrayal of their respective relationships have continuing relevance throughout the Trilogy. Within the compass of the entire Prose Lancelot the thorough exploration of the feudal bond and the power of friendship through Claudas and Galahot equips us to understand more fully the dynamics of the concentrated events of the Tod des König Artus, where emotions, allegiances and motives are drawn so tightly together.

The feudal relationships of Claudas

In the detailed analysis of Claudas' physiognomy and personality (I,26,17ff.) an interesting comment is made about his attitude to relations with others:

Er hasset die im allerheymlichest waren und mynnet die
im allerferrest gesessen waren und im waren undertenig.
(I,26,25f.)

Other than with his wife and his son Dorins, Claudas has close contact only with those who are bound to him feudally, most notably a squire whom he had brought up from childhood (I,32,17f.),

and Phariens, a knight who entered his service after having been exiled from his native Gaule.¹⁷ Although Claudas is recognised by other figures and by the narrator to be a verreter (I,1,14; II,551,20f.), paradoxically there is no one in the Prose Lancelot who knows better the value of a loyal vassal. Through his dealings with both the squire and Phariens Claudas reveals the strength of the feudal bond by testing it to the limit.

Claudas took the squire to Logres with him, to help spy on King Artus. On their return to Bohorges Claudas asks the squire's advice about whether or not he should attack Artus. The squire, after listing Artus' many qualities and strengths, advises Claudas not to, adding that he finds Artus such an honourable man that he would warn him himself, were he to hear of anything planned against Artus (I,30,35ff.). Claudas bristles at this and accuses the squire of disloyalty (I,31,3ff.). Then follows a heated exchange between Claudas and the squire in which Claudas pushes the squire to justify his statement. The squire proceeds to outline clearly the duties of a vassal, expatiating in particular on the importance of giving good and loyal advice, but also pointing out that the vassal cannot be held responsible for his lord's response to his advice:

' ... Enwil er auch synes radts nit volgen, der getruw und gut ist, und volget synselbs bösen gedencken, kumet es im anders dann wol, darzu darff ers nymands anders verwissen dann imselber, und sin ratmann enhat sin wedder laster noch schande.' (I,31,21ff.)

He also makes it clear that he would not in any way harm Claudas if he had not formally renounced his allegiance to him as a vassal (I,31,6ff.). Claudas recognises his loyalty and integrity, but

provokes him further by accusing him of verretery for his eulogy of Artus. Claudas wilfully drives the squire to the point where the squire feels he must renounce his allegiance (I,31,29ff.). Claudas realises he has gone too far and placates him, telling him how, in recognition of 'die grossen truw' (I,33,14) he has seen in him, he intends to invest him as a knight and make him his truchsess. This brief episode with the squire functions in the text as prefiguration of the more detailed study of how Phariens seeks to honour his obligations as a vassal.

The feudal relationship which Phariens has with Claudas is far more complex than that of the squire, and it is fraught with difficulty. It is complicated by two factors. First, Claudas commits adultery with Phariens' wife.¹⁸ Phariens surprises Claudas lying with his wife, but Claudas escapes. This places Phariens in a very awkward situation, for he fears retaliatory action from Claudas 'wann er (Phariens) keyn krafft mocht gethun wiedder yn (Claudas)' (I,22,5f.). He allays Claudas' fears by feigning ignorance of the identity of his wife's lover and calls upon the mutual obligation of lord and vassal to give advice when it is sought for:

'Herre, ich enweiss wer er sy, myn wip wil mirs nicht sagen, wann also vil saget sie mir das es uwer ritter eyner were. Nu gebt mir radt, als ein herre billich sol synem knecht!' (I,22,10ff.)

Phariens' relationship with his overlord, Claudas, is further complicated by the allegiance he had sworn to King Bohort. It is reported that Bohort had exiled Phariens from Gaule for

manslaughter (I,17,11ff.). Phariens exploited his knowledge of the affairs of King Bohort, and, indeed, of Bohort's brother, King Ban, by offering his services to their enemy, Claudas. Claudas welcomed Phariens and treated him with great favour. However, Phariens had never renounced his allegiance to Bohort. Thus, when by chance Phariens meets King Bohort's wife, Queen Evaine with her two young sons, Lyonel and Bohort, after the usurpation of their lands by Claudas, Phariens regards the two boys as his rightful lords (I,17,4ff.). Queen Evaine gives her sons in custody to Phariens who looks after them in secret. Phariens' wife, seeking revenge for having been locked up upon the discovery of her infidelity, leaks the information to Claudas that Phariens has Bohort's sons in his care (I,23,4ff.). In what follows I have drawn out, from what is a lively episode of realistic detail, the principles according to which Phariens meets the various complications of his situation, and how he orders his loyalties in his attempt to honour both sets of allegiances.

Phariens justifies his support of Lyonel and Bohort as his rightful lords (I,63,32ff.), although Claudas reminds him of the allegiance he swore to him (I,64,29ff.). That Phariens honours his bond with Claudas is made evident when he prevents his nephew, Lambegus, from killing Claudas as his enemy. Phariens reminds Lambegus of the dictates of the feudal code:

' ... Sieht er synen herren in noten das er den lip must verliesen, er ist im schuldig zu helffen mit lib und mit güt; er sy dann vor von im gescheiden, das er im sin manschaft und das gut, das er von im hatt, off hab gegeben. ...' (I,67,30ff.)

Claudas responds to Phariens' loyal conduct, and assures him that

henceforth he has his fruntschafft (I,68,7). However, Phariens' allegiance to Claudas is further endangered when there is a threat to his nephew's life by Claudas, for Phariens asserts that the blood tie would have priority above all else and that he would have to avenge his nephew's death (I,71,20ff.). The threat of Lambegus' death is, however, averted, and later Phariens finds he has further cause to lecture Lambegus on the sanctity of the feudal tie (I,73,32ff.). He insists that the proper procedure should be observed at all times and details instances when a breach with one's overlord would be justified:

' ... Es ist auch in disser welt kein grösser untruw dann das ein man synen herren ungetruwlich dötet. Wann ist das gethan das der herre wiedder synen man missetut und der man wiedder synen herren, so ist wol recht das der ein den andern vor synen glichen erfolge. Enmag auch dem man kein gnad von synem herren geschehen, so rate ich im das er nem syner gnoss ein teil und gebe sym herren sine manschafft uff mit gutem urkunde. Wann was der man mit güttem urkunde thut, das glichet bass der warheit dann dem falsch. Will sich dann der herre nit bessern wiedder synen man, so mag der man sich rechnen wiedder synen herren, wo er bass mag dann sin herre, on synen herren zu töten und syns herren verretrniss. ... ' (I,74,7ff.)

As Elspeth Kennedy has commented, 'the unusual feature of the first part of the Prose Lancelot is the detailed, almost technical, discussion of points of feudal theory.'¹⁹ Kennedy compares what Phariens says about the procedure a vassal may follow when he has been wronged by his lord with a passage from Beaumanoir's Coutumes de Beauvaisis, an early codification of old French law.²⁰ The similarities between what Beaumanoir prescribes and what Phariens in the Prose Lancelot proclaims to Lambegus are striking. The narrator reports in detail Phariens' deliberations about the right and proper course of action with each new turn of

events and how he constantly attempts to honour both his allegiances in searching for a satisfactory solution (I,79,3ff.). He keeps his personal feelings well under control and, although he lets Claudas know the animosity he feels towards him, he none the less subordinates his emotions to his feudal responsibilities, for, as he comments to Claudas, it is:

' ... besser das man des zornes meister sy dann der zorn sin meister. Welch man sin zorn volgen wil, der muss dick untrúw und schalckeit thun, da er beyde, gott und die welt, mit verluset. ... '
(I,79,13ff.)

Ironically, however, shortly after this remark Phariens turns on Lambegus, his nephew, in a fit of anger. When Lambegus treacherously attacks a knight whom he takes to be Claudas (I,81,14ff.), Phariens' honour as a loyal vassal prompts him to attack Lambegus. It is only the intervention of Phariens' wife that prevents Phariens from killing his own kinsman.²¹

All Phariens' attempts to effect a peaceful reconciliation between the subjects of Gaune and Claudas eventually founder. They founder on the tie which Phariens himself had been prepared to give absolute priority to, the tie of blood. Claudas insists on seeking revenge for the death of his son (I,97,17ff.). In the face of this insistence Phariens decides that the time has come when he can no longer maintain a balance between his allegiances. He formally renounces his manschafft with Claudas (I,99,13ff.).

Claudas later offers peace in return for Lambegus. The men of Gaune refuse such a bargain (I,105,1ff.), but, when Lambegus overhears Phariens declaring to himself that he would

sacrifice himself for the sake of peace, he is prompted to hand himself over to Claudas. Even though Claudas is himself treacherous by nature, he recognises the magnanimity of Lambegus' action and spares him (I,108,24ff.). Claudas asks Phariens and Lambegus to swear allegiance to him (I,109,13ff.), but Phariens is not prepared to enter anyone's service until he has news of what has become of his 'recht herren' who were abducted by the Lady of the Lake's damsel (I,109,21ff.). Phariens rides to the Lake to join his young lords. He dies shortly afterwards (I,111,32f.).

I have dwelt on Pharien's brief career in the romance at some length, for, although he is written out of the narrative at a very early stage, the account of his fraught and complex relationship with Claudas introduces many of the issues which subsequently govern the course and the development of the entire Trilogy, that is the problem of divided loyalties, the priority of the blood tie, the difficulty of controlling and containing personal feelings, adultery, and the dictates and constraints of the feudal code. One aspect of the identity of the main protagonist knights, that is their feudal identity, is explored fully through Phariens. His deliberations on his responsibilities as a vassal are as generally informative as are the Lady of the Lake's discourse on chivalry and the sage's comments to Artus on the duties of a king, providing as they do some of the theory underlying the practice of vassalage.

The Prose Lancelot opens, then, on a decidedly feudal note with Claudas' usurpation of the lands of King Artus' vassals and

the description of the involved relations between Claudas as lord and Phariens as vassal. Indeed, the predominantly feudal atmosphere of long stretches of the first part of the Lancelot proper (Kluge's volume one) have more in common with the heroic world of the chansons de geste and the Arthurian chronicles than with the Arthurian verse romances of Chrétien and his adaptors.²²

Gawan was an important figure amongst King Artus' men in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia regum Britanniae and Wace's Roman de Brut.²³ In the Prose Lancelot the romancer has incorporated something of the feudal identity which Gawan has in Geoffrey's and Wace's chronicles and has married this to his identity as the exemplar of Arthurian chivalry in the verse romances. I wish now to examine how a number of the facets of the feudal relationship as portrayed through both the squire's and Phariens' association with Claudas recur in Gawan's relationship with Artus.

The feudal relationship of Gawan and Artus

Gawan is at the one time Artus' nephew, his vassal and a companion Round Table knight. Gawan's autonomy is clearly circumscribed by the close integration of these three ties and their corresponding sets of obligations. Whereas Lancelot is coerced by oaths sworn on the love he has for the person most dear to him, that is, of course, the Queen (e.g. I,564,4f.; I,632,34f.; II,14,30f.; II,284,9f.; II,392,25f.), Gawan is nearly always bidden on the oath of loyalty he owes to the King or the King and Queen (e.g. I,232,14f.; III,425,15; III,429,6). The

mutual obligations of the lord and his vassal are demonstrated in that Artus is sometimes bidden on the oath of loyalty he owes to Gawan as Gawan's lord (e.g. I,285,5f.).²⁴ One of the salient characteristics of Gawan's conduct is his observance of the loyalty a vassal owes his lord. Just as Claudas recognises and appreciates this quality in his squire and in Phariens, so Artus esteems it in Gawan and praises him for possessing it (e.g. I,537,5ff.). Gawan shows himself to have a keen awareness of what his obligations to his lord are, and he articulates this on a number of occasions. Thus, when Gawan interrupts his quest for Lancelot to go to Artus' aid in the battle against Galahot, he addresses his companion knights on the importance of upholding their lord's honour:

Und das riet myn herre Gawan; er sprach das besser were das sie meyneydig wurden dann ir rechter herre beyde, lant und ere, verlúr. 'Er soll zu recht nit geuneret bliben on uns, wir mögen wol geuneret bliben on yne; wir mögen lant verliesen on syn schande, er enmag keynes verliesen on die unsern.' (I,260,20ff.)

During the 'false Queen' episode Gawan regards it as his duty as Artus' vassal to warn Artus about the folly of his behaviour. His words recall Phariens' comments on the mutual obligation of lord and vassal to help one another and to offer advice when necessary (I,22,10ff.), and they echo closely the comments of Claudas' squire on the same subject (I,31,21ff. - see above p. 248):

'Herre', sprach er, 'welch man getruwe ist der sol synem herren alles das wol lastern das wiedder sin ere ist. Wil es dann der herre lassen, das ist des mannes ere; wil ers nit lassen, so ist der man unschuldig daran. ... ' (I,532,10ff.)

Gawan occupies a key position at court and Artus turns to him for advice and support in all matters. However, this reliance on his nephew can place Gawan in awkward situations. It is Artus' function as head of the Round Table to send his knights out in pursuit of honour and renown, but as the feudal lord of Logres, he must also consider the defence of his lands. In addition to this, Artus has a strong emotional bond with Gawan. The coincidence of the demands of any two or all of these factors at any one time produces a conflicting and contradictory set of responses in Artus. For example:

1) When Artus sees Lancelot, incognito, distinguish himself in battle against Galahot, he wishes to have Lancelot for his geselle (I,251,23f.). Artus turns to Gawan, in his role as the leading knight of the Round Table, to lead the quest for Lancelot. He stings him into action by saying that his court can no longer be considered a centre of excellence unless men like Lancelot are part of it (I,254,8ff.). Gawan impulsively springs into action and Artus has to check him from emptying his court of all his knights, decreeing that only forty knights may accompany Gawan. Gawan swears not to return to court until he has completed his quest for Lancelot (I,255,20ff.). This alarms Artus, for he is aware of the need he has of Gawan's support in the resumption of the battle against Galahot. Gawan finds himself in something of a dilemma, as he seeks to satisfy the dual demands Artus is making on him. He must set out as a knight errant on the quest for Lancelot, but he has also to defend Artus' lands. When the battle with Galahot is resumed, Gawan's quest for Lancelot is still incomplete and so he has to decide

whether to observe the oath he swore as a knight errant not to return until he had found Lancelot, or whether to honour his feudal obligations. He gives priority to the latter.

2) After the battle with Galahot has been terminated, Artus' thoughts turn again to the incognito knight, Lancelot. He reproves Gawan for not having completed the quest for Lancelot. Gawan feels geuneret (I,307,29), although he reminds Artus that it was to help defend the King's honour that he abandoned the quest. Gawan immediately prepares to set out again, but Artus regrets having spoken to him groblichen (I,308,9), for he fears that he might never see his nephew again (I,309,15f.). He asks the Queen to try to prevent Gawan from leaving the court, but to no avail. Artus goes to extraordinary lengths in his efforts to hold Gawan at court. He has all his knights kneel to Gawan and he kneels to him himself (I,309,7ff.). However, Gawan bids Artus not to hold him back against his will. The Queen eventually persuades the King to allow Gawan to go, comforting him by reminding him that Gawan had succeeded in many other quests.

Where Phariens had two disparate allegiances to honour, to his rechte herren, Lyonel and Bohort, and to Claudas, Gawan's various allegiances are centred in Artus. However, both Phariens and Gawan have to contend with essentially the same problem, a conflict of loyalties. In the Lancelot proper Gawan is on occasion hard-pressed to balance and fulfil his various obligations, but he does manage to do so. However, in the Tod des König Artus the delicate balance which Gawan had striven to

maintain is irrevocably disturbed. As all the latent tensions developed in the earlier part of the Trilogy come to the surface, Gawan finds himself compelled to choose between one set of obligations and another. When the King decrees that Ginover should be burnt at the stake for her adultery with Lancelot, Gawan is greatly distressed, for he remembers all the honour she had bestowed upon him in the course of his chivalric career (III,551,13f.). He is not prepared to watch her die, and so he resorts to the extreme action which Phariens and the squire took when faced with an impossible situation by Claudas; he threatens to renounce the fief he holds from the King (III,551,15f.) and so free himself of his obligations as a vassal. In the swift course of events, however, the threat is never realised.²⁵ The real rupture for Gawan comes with the death of his brothers at the hands of Lancelot and Bohort. In the Lancelot proper Phariens was prepared to recognise the absolute priority of the blood tie when his nephew, Lambegus, was under threat from Claudas (I,71,20ff.). In the Tod des König Artus Gawan, too, places allegiance to his kin above all else. The violation of the blood tie unleashes an implacable desire for revenge in Gawan, and he can no longer contain and control his feelings. He sacrifices the fellowship of the Round Table and the welfare of the Kingdom of Logres to his insistence on a blood feud.

The feudal relationship of Lancelot and Artus

The manner in which the Prose Lancelot romancer has drawn on the two strands of the Lancelot legend as represented

by Ulrich von Zatzikhoven's Lanzelet and Chrétien de Troyes' Le Chevalier de la Charrette reveals much about his conception of the figures of Lancelot and Artus in the Trilogy.²⁶ In Ulrich's romance the hero-knight is closely associated with Artus in that he is his maternal nephew.²⁷ Lanzelet's relationship with Artus is, however, uncomplicated, for there is no hint of a love relationship between himself and Ginover, Artus' queen. In his portrayal of Lancelot as the Queen's lover Chrétien allowed his hero no closer association with Artus than through his membership of the Round Table. The hero in the Prose Lancelot is no longer related to Artus, but a feudal bond has been created between them. Lancelot's father, Ban, is a vassal of Artus.

Through drawing on the chronicle tradition of Arthurian literature, in particular Wace's Roman de Brut, the prose romancer establishes a much more forceful feudal identity for Artus than the King had in the verse romances. In the Lancelot proper Artus leads his men valiantly in battle, e.g. against Galahot (I,235,26ff.), against the Saxons (I,441,33f.) and against Floren (II,767,22ff.). In the Tod des König Artus he leads his men against Lancelot (III,581,14ff.), the Romans (III,693,11ff.) and Morderet (III,730,10ff.). This picture of Artus as an active feudal monarch is strengthened by mention in the Lancelot proper of his involvement in battles other than those actually related in the narrative, e.g. his battles against King Yon from Mynren Irlande, the King from Uber den Marcken and King Aguisel of Scotland (I,29,13ff.).

The image of Artus in the chronicles as a fighting monarch is at variance with the portrayal of him in the verse romances. The function of Artus in the verse romances is to preside over the illustrious Round Table, from which individual knights set out in their pursuit of adventure and to which they report back, once they have completed their tasks. Artus himself, however, does not undertake adventures. The degree of Artus' passivity is most explicit in the episode of the abduction of the Queen which takes place in Chrétien's Le Chevalier de la Charrette and which is recounted in Chrétien's Yvain and, of course, in Iwein, Hartmann von Aue's adaptation of Yvain. In both instances Artus relies on his knights to rescue the Queen.

The Prose Lancelot romancer has retained both facets of Artus' literary biography in his account of the Lancelot legend.²⁸ In some instances he has married the two traditions. Thus, in the Lancelot proper knights still depart from Artus' court on quests and return to it to report the extent of their success. However, it is worthy of note that many of the people whom the Round Table knights assist in the course of their adventures are vassals of Artus, e.g. the Lady of Noaus (I,136,29ff.), the Lady of Galnoie (II,224,3ff.). This linking of chivalric adventure with the assistance of Artus' vassals further emphasises the feudal framework of the Lancelot proper.

In other instances the prose romancer exploits the differing portrayals of Artus to draw out the ambivalence and the paradox which lies at the centre of Chrétien's Le Chevalier de la Charrette. In the Prose Lancelot, then, Lancelot is the

greatest knight in the Arthurian world, but his chivalric success rests on the inspiration he draws from his love for Artus' queen. In the 'cart' episode of the Prose Lancelot Artus, as in Chrétien's romance, loses Ginover to Meleagant on a point of honour. When Meleagant arrives at Kamalot he issues the following challenge (I,599,10ff.): those knights of Artus who are held prisoner in Gorre will be released, if Artus will allow one of his knights to lead the Queen into the forest where Meleagant will fight with him. Should Meleagant win, then he will take the Queen with him to Gorre. Artus is not prepared to put the Queen at risk, but Key, his seneschal, tricks him into granting an unspecified wish by threatening to leave his service (I,600,18ff.). Key claims the Queen and rides off into the forest to meet Meleagant. When Didonel der Wilde challenges Artus about the safety of the Queen, Artus comments that he cannot stop Key, because he had given Key his word of honour (I,601,15f.). The enforced passivity of the King in this instance allows Lancelot to shine in his rescue of the Queen, and invites a comparison between the King and Lancelot as defenders of Ginover which is decidedly in Lancelot's favour.

The conventional passivity of Artus in the verse romances is not only absorbed into the Prose Lancelot, but it is also translated in some instances into a specifically feudal context. Artus is guilty of negligence towards his vassal Ban, Lancelot's father, for he does not go to Ban's assistance when Claudas attacks him. Ban is despoiled of his lands and dies, leaving Lancelot dispossessed of his patrimony. Lancelot's upbringing

by the Lady of the Lake is presented, then, as the result of Artus' failure to honour his obligations towards Lancelot.

Artus' inactivity is partially excused, for we learn how at the time of the usurpation of Ban's lands Artus had considerable political problems, both from rebellious barons within his lands and from aggressive external foes (I,2,8ff.; I,28,30f.).

However, the lack of any subsequent attempt by Artus to win back Ban's lands from Claudas is criticised sharply on two occasions - by a monk (I,47,21ff.) and by the sage who upbraids Artus for his poor conduct as king (I,243,27ff.). As Lancelot is dispossessed of his lands, he is free from the obligations a vassal owes his lord. Lancelot's independence from Artus is constantly stressed in the narrative - on the occasion of his investiture he contrives to have his sword given him by Ginover; he will only join the Round Table at the request of the Queen; even once Artus has assisted him to win back his patrimony, Lancelot will not accept the feudal responsibility of his lands, because, as he clearly states in the Tod des König Artus: 'Dann hett er (Artus) mir alles syn rych geben, ich gebe es im alles wiedder in disser pünt als es yczu ist, umb des willen wann ich nit von im wolt zu lehen han.' (III,625,6ff.)²⁹

Thus, within the context of feudal relations in the Lancelot proper the emphasis falls squarely on Artus' obligations towards Lancelot rather than Lancelot's towards Artus.³⁰ The sense of Artus' obligation to Lancelot is further strengthened by Lancelot's services to him as a knight of the Round Table. The magnitude of Artus' debt to Lancelot is made clear by the Queen in the

Lancelot proper - when Morgane attempts, unsuccessfully, to reveal Lancelot's adultery to Artus' court, the Queen makes a speech in Lancelot's defence in which she lists all his deeds in Artus' service:

' ... Er (Lancelot) macht uch herre uff einen tag uber drissig konigriche, er macht uch den besten man underthan der nû lebet, das ist Galahut. Er hett gewalt mit uch zu thun allen sinen willen. Lancelot erlost mich von dem tode mit siner grossen biederbekeit und gab mir myn ere wiedder, Lancelot erlost uchselbs uss der Sahsen gefengniss und uweren neven Gawan und Galahot und Hestor und Keheriet. Des ist nit lang das Lancelot den Jemerlichen Thorn gewan und losst daruss Gawan und Ywan und den herczogen von Clarenz; darzu slug er den besten ritter dot den man lebende wust und den stercksten, darzu gewann er die Jemerlichen Hûde und uberwand alda die zwenczig ritter. Er slug zu Camalot zwen riesen dot. ... ' (I,588,16ff.)

This speech is echoed in the Tod des König Artus, when Lancelot attempts to dissuade Artus and Gawan from waging war on him. Lancelot reminds them all of his great deeds in their service (III,618,7ff.). Artus himself expresses on a number of occasions how much Lancelot has done for him (e.g. II,659,15ff.).

The Prose Lancelot romancer, then, has eliminated the kinship tie of maternal uncle/nephew which bound Lanzelet to Artus in Ulrich von Zatzikhoven's Lanzelet, and has instead introduced a feudal bond between the King and the hero-knight, which is presented in such a way that the emphasis falls on Artus' obligations towards Lancelot. At the same time the prose romancer has greatly developed the association in Chrétien's romance of Lancelot with Artus as a Round Table knight. The geselleschafft which Artus and Lancelot share as members of the

Round Table is deepened into a friendship.

FRIENDSHIP

In the verse romances of Chrétien de Troyes, Hartmann von Aue and Wolfram von Eschenbach, Gawain traditionally became the particular friend at Arthur's court of the young and unproven hero-knight. As a paragon of chivalric excellence himself, Gawain is quick to recognise the potential of the young knight. Through example, advice and interest he seeks to encourage the newcomer in his pursuit of chivalric honour:

Für Alexander und seinen Sohn Cligés, für Erec, Iwein und Parzival ist diese höfische Freundschaft mit Gawain eine einmalige persönliche Bindung, in der sie die Vollkommenheit des höfischen Menschentums in gesellschaft, dienest und Bewährung erringen. (31)

This special friendship between the hero-knight and Gawain has been retained in the Prose Lancelot. However, it is no longer 'eine einmalige persönliche Bindung'. One of the most remarkable and recurrent features in the delineation of Lancelot's personality in the Trilogy is his ability to inspire great friendship in others, most notably, in addition to Gawan, in the three rulers, Galahot, Artus and Bandemagus. In the following section of this chapter I shall analyse and contrast the friendships of Lancelot with these men. Although the Prose Lancelot is undoubtedly best known as a romance about love, I hope to demonstrate that it deserves to be equally known as a work about friendship.

First, though, I should like to draw attention to the

vocabulary used in the Prose Lancelot to describe friendship. The MHG term fruntschaft has a much greater range of meaning than the modern term Freundschaft.³² The word frunt can mean simply 'friend', but it is also used to refer to a 'kinsman'.³³ Frunt can thus be synonymous with mâc. However, as Wolfgang Harms has noted³⁴, in some instances in the Prose Lancelot (e.g. I,372,21ff.) a distinction is drawn between mâc and frunt in the sense of kinsman. It would appear that a relationship between mâge need not necessarily mean that those involved are very intimate or devoted to one another. Frunt, however, seems to be used to refer to those kinsmen whom one has trust in and upon whom one may rely.

It is difficult to be precise about the semantic range of frunt and geselle. They are frequently used interchangeably in the sense of 'companion' or 'friend'. However, in the Prose Lancelot geselle tends to be used more readily to express a relationship between knights which exists by virtue of their identity as fellow knights errant rather than because of a personal attachment. Thus, geselle is used almost invariably to refer to the member knights of the Round Table (e.g. I,481,6; II,590,15f.). Frunt is used to express a relationship of greater intimacy (e.g. I,279,34f.; II,297,11f.). However, the address lieber frunt is often used to a knight with whom the speaker does not have a particular relationship (e.g. I,131,26; I,148,15).

The term fruntschaft can also be used to refer to the devoted loyalty which can exist between a vassal and his overlord (e.g. I,99,19; I,247,15f.). I have focused on the semantic

overlap between the terms geselle, frunt and mâc because, as I shall draw attention to later in this section, I think that the prose romancer has on occasion consciously exploited this semantic ambivalence.

The Inspiration for friendship

When Lancelot is first introduced to Artus and his court by the Lady of the Lake, all are impressed by the young man's noble and handsome appearance. As in the verse romances, Gawan recognises Lancelot's potential and he comments to Artus, 'ich wene wol das er ein meisterritter werde' (I,132,3). In the course of the battle which Galahot wages on Artus shortly after Lancelot's advent at court, Lancelot, incognito, fulfils the promise Gawan had seen in him. His outstanding performance on the battlefield is noted by Galahot and Artus alike and arouses instantly the same strong desire in both rulers. Each wishes to have Lancelot as his geselle (Galahot I,251,1f.; Artus I,251,23f.). Artus' desire is echoed by his nephew Gawan: 'In uwerem lande ist dhein konigrich das ich als lieb hette als das ich syn geselle müst syn' (I,251,26f.). Gawan undertakes a quest for Lancelot, a quest which he regards as second only to that for the Grail (I,254,18ff.). At a much later stage in the Lancelot proper Bandemagus experiences a similar reaction to that of Galahot, Artus and Gawan. After Lancelot, incognito, had defeated Argondras at Bandemagus' court (a knight who had falsely accused Lancelot of slaying Meleagant treacherously), Bandemagus is delighted to discover his identity. He is inspired to express

how honoured he would feel to have Lancelot's geselleschafft (II,105,17ff.).

The similarity in the attraction which Lancelot has for Artus, Galahot, Bandemagus and Gawan is underlined by the vocabulary they use to express how highly they would value Lancelot's geselleschafft. Galahot, the most powerful political figure in the Prose Lancelot, refers to Lancelot, a landless knight errant and exiled from his country as 'den richsten man' (I,276,3). Bandemagus, a vassal king of Galahot, feels himself to be 'zu arm ein man' (II,105,18f.) to merit Lancelot's companionship. King Artus would rather have Lancelot's company than a kingdom, and Gawan, heir to his uncle's throne³⁵, supports his comment saying 'mich duncket wie er fast rich were der einen also guten gesellen hett' (I,251,25f.). These remarks by rulers are in counterpoint to Lancelot's own assertion that he is merely an 'armer enterbter ritter' (II,541,7).³⁶ The metaphoric use of rich and arm to describe the value of friendship is commonplace, but what is noteworthy is the consistency with which it is used by the men who become Lancelot's friends. The verbal parallels establish a further structural link in the narrative between these men. Furthermore, the verbal echoes stress that the geselleschafft which Artus, Galahot, Bandemagus and Gawan so ardently desire to have with Lancelot has nothing to do with social position, but is rather a recognition of Lancelot's personal worth as a knight.

The starting point for all Lancelot's friendships is an admiration of Lancelot's prowess as a fighting knight. Prowess

in arms, however, is not sufficient in itself to warrant the respect Lancelot receives. Claudas, the usurper of Lancelot's patrimony, Meleagant, the treacherous son of Bandemagus, and Claudas' marshal are all recognised as gut ritter, but this designation is with specific reference to their fighting prowess only, for their reputations are vitiated by their treacherous natures (Claudas - I,1,13f.; Meleagant - I,641,7f.; Claudas' marshal - II,690,6ff.).³⁷ Xenja von Ertzdorff comments with regard to the friendship of Gawain with the hero-knight in the verse romances: 'Denn persönliche Zuneigung ist nur dort möglich, wo sittliche und ritterliche Vollkommenheit in gleichem Masse vorhanden sind'.³⁸ The emotional bond which develops between Lancelot and his gesellen rests, as will emerge from the analysis of the various friendships which follows, on a similar base of mutual respect and admiration.

Lancelot's response to the eager requests for his geselleschafft is consistently one of reluctance. He is unhappy at having to compromise either his autonomy as a knight errant or his single-minded devotion to the Queen by entering formally into another relationship. When Lancelot agrees to become Galahot's geselle, it is as a means to an end, for he makes his companionship conditional on Galahot yielding in the battle he has been waging against Artus (I,277,35ff.). Lancelot becomes a geselle of the Round Table only at the Queen's request (I,480,5ff.), and when Lancelot agrees to become Bandemagus' geselle, Lancelot cautions him about how much he can expect of his companionship:

' ... ich bin mee bij andern luden dan bij mir selber,
deshalp kan ich uch myn geselleschafft nit uff getragen
als ir die villicht begerent. ... ' (II,105,31ff.) (39)

Despite the respect and feeling which Lancelot has for Galahot (I,279,32ff.), he none the less feels constrained by Galahot's possessive nature. Thus, when Galahot has taken Lancelot to Sorelois so that he might enjoy Lancelot's company undisturbed, Lancelot frets about the lack of opportunity for practising his chivalric skill (I,448,2ff.). Artus recognises the value of Lancelot's membership of the Round Table and he expresses his appreciation of the outstanding contribution Lancelot makes to its renown (e.g. II,437,9ff.). However, like Galahot and Bandemagus, Artus has a strong personal desire for Lancelot's company and thus he laments Lancelot's prolonged absences from court (II,41,8f.). Both Galahot and Artus fear for Lancelot's safety in his pursuit of adventure, and they express their anxieties in very similar terms:

Galahot gedacht aber das er yn strites wol behuten
wolt als ferre als er mocht und ungemeheliches
lebens. (I,448,7f.)

and:

' ... Dan ich (Artus) forcht sin das er daran die
lenge und mit der har da durch zu ungemach komen
mocht.' (II,41,9f.)

The desire for Lancelot's geselleschafft which Artus, Galahot and Bandemagus experience when they first encounter him is the same in all cases, and Lancelot's response to the overtures of friendship which these men make to him is consistently one of reluctance to compromise his autonomy. However, the manner in

which these several friendships of Lancelot are developed differs considerably.

Galahot's friendship for Lancelot

The theme of friendship which extends throughout the Prose Lancelot begins with Galahot's remarkable love for Lancelot. In its detail and analysis the account of the genesis, growth and influence of Galahot's friendship with Lancelot is comparable to the examination of the feudal relationship between Claudas and Phariens.

After her examination of the friendships which Gawain has with the hero-knights of the verse romances, Xenja von Ertzdorff concludes:

Die höfische Freundschaft ist diskret und in ihren Äusserungen zurückhaltend, aber erfüllt von persönlicher Zuneigung und Liebe, die in die hohe kühle Welt höfischer Idealität einen freundlichen Schimmer menschlichen Verstehens und Verbundenseins fallen lässt. (40)

There is nothing of this restraint in Galahot's friendship for Lancelot. The love which Galahot conceives for Lancelot is as sudden and overpowering as Lancelot's was for the Queen. From the moment he sees Lancelot in action in the battle he was waging against Artus he is determined that Lancelot should be his geselle whatever the cost (I,251,1f.). During the second stage of the battle Galahot offers the incognito knight hospitality and soon declares to Lancelot that he will never find another man who would be prepared to do as much for him as he is (I,277,28ff.). When Lancelot states the conditions under which he is prepared to be Galahot's geselle, i.e. that Galahot should yield to Artus,

Galahot does not hesitate to relinquish his ambition to become the most powerful man in the world. As Lancelot watches Galahot set off to go and abase himself before Artus, he realises that Galahot is as good as his word: 'Er gedacht in synem herczen das er nye keinen so guten frunt gewünne noch so guten gesellen' (I,279,34f.).

A measure is given of Galahot's devotion to Lancelot in a conversation he has with Artus, Ginover and Gawan shortly after he has yielded to Artus. Galahot quizzes his companions about what they would give to be assured of Lancelot's geselleschafft for as long as they lived. Artus replies that he would give the incognito knight half of all he possesses, save his wife whom he will share with no one (I,285,8ff.), a sad irony in view of the subsequent development of Lancelot's and Ginover's love. Gawan responds by saying that he would like to have been born the most beautiful damsel, so that Lancelot would love him above all others for as long as they lived (I,285,13ff.). The Queen says that Gawan has spoken for women and that she can add no more (I,285,19ff.)! Gawan then coerces Galahot into revealing what he would give for the knight's geselleschafft. It is interesting that Gawan should coerce him on an oath sworn on the person most dear to Galahot (I,285,22f.), for that is the oath used consistently to coerce Lancelot in the course of the narrative (see above p. 254). A further parallel is thus drawn between Lancelot's love for the Queen and Galahot's for Lancelot. This parallel is reinforced by Galahot's answer to Gawan's challenge:

'Herre', sprach er, 'by derselben trûw da by ir mich
besworn hant, ich wolt myn gross ere darumb
zuschanden lassen werden, off das ich syner
gesellschaft allweg als sicher were als er der myner
wol wesen ob er wolt.' (I,285,24ff.)

It is worth noting that it is Gawan who comments on the magnitude of Galahot's offer in his readiness to sacrifice his ere, for here are the beginnings of a structural contrast in the narrative between the personalities of Lancelot and Galahot on the one hand and Gawan on the other. This contrast, however, only becomes apparent as the Lancelot proper progresses. In the course of the romance the safety of the Queen is endangered on a number of occasions. In the efforts of Lancelot and Gawan to defend her Lancelot's readiness to sacrifice his ere in Ginover's service is juxtaposed with Gawan's concern for his ere and his unwillingness to let it be compromised.⁴¹ Thus, in the subordination of his ere to his friendship with Lancelot Galahot's devotion matches that of Lancelot to the Queen.

Galahot's concern for and dependence on Lancelot is matched only by the strength of feeling in love relationships in the romance, most notably those of Lancelot and Ginover, and Hestor and his lady. Galahot is as possessive and jealous of Lancelot (I,482,23) as Hestor's lady was of Hestor (I,319,8ff.). Gawan recognises the quality of Galahot's feeling for Lancelot and comments to Artus: 'er (Lancelot) ist im (Galahot) vil lieber dann uch myn frau die konigin sy' (I,479,23f.). There is no hint in the text that we should regard Galahot's love for Lancelot as homosexual. It would seem rather that the intention of the prose romancer in identifying Galahot's love for Lancelot with

Lancelot's love for the Queen and Hestor's for his lady is to reveal the potential strength of friendship. The prose romancer aligns two relationships which are based on mutual attraction rather than the social structures of feudalism and kinship.

However, the emotional bond of friendship is also equated with loyalty to one's kin. The description of Galahot's response when he thinks, erroneously, that Lancelot has been killed parallels the expressions of grief at the death of a kinsman. Thus, when Galahot thinks that he has lost Lancelot, he declares, 'warumb lebe ich so lang, sit ich verlorn han das mir lieber was dann mynselbs lip?' (I,477,24f.). Claudas voices a similar sentiment, when he laments the death of his son (I,63,5f.), and so does Gawan in his grief at the death of his brothers (III,569,3ff.). On their way to Hohfertif Garde Galahot and Lancelot faint in turn, when they think the other is dead (I,483,34; I,484,5). Gawan faints at the sight of his dead brothers (III,567,7ff.), as do Bandemagus (II,114,14f.) and Claudas (I,61,26) over their dead sons. Early in the Prose Lancelot, then, friendship is established as a force as strong as love or familial ties.

One of the functions in the Lancelot proper of Galahot's friendship for Lancelot is to deflect attention away from a conflict of interests between Artus and Lancelot.⁴² The love relationship between Lancelot and Ginover starts properly with the exchange of their first kiss after Galahot has contrived a private meeting between them (I,296,26ff.). It is significant that subsequently Lancelot is not torn between his loyalty to

Artus and the Queen, but rather between Galahot and Ginover. Lancelot promised Galahot his geselleschafft in return for Galahot yielding to Artus in battle. Thus, Lancelot has an obligation to Galahot, whereas Lancelot has no feudal allegiance to honour towards Artus (see above, p. 258ff.), and at this stage in the romance he is not yet even a member of the Round Table. Furthermore, Lancelot has done Artus a service in getting Galahot to concede victory to Artus.⁴³

Lancelot's moral stature in the Prose Lancelot is enhanced by Galahot's friendship for him. The radical change which Lancelot has worked in Galahot is made clear in the narrative, when Galahot reveals to Lancelot his former political ambition of achieving mastery of the world (I,486,22ff.). He tells Lancelot how from the first encounter with Lancelot his priorities and values changed, for in Lancelot he felt that he had all that was most valuable:

' ... Wann sitherr ich uch allererst bekante, verlose ich den willen miteinander und kert mynen syn an uch, so sere das mich ducht das ich all die welt hett da ich uch gewann; ich hett auch! ... ' (I,487,14ff.)

Through Lancelot Galahot has come to appreciate the value of friendship and to regard it as the greatest good (I,485,15ff.). Galahot regards Lancelot in some measure as a divine instrument who has rescued him from his sin of hybris in wishing to conquer the world (I,487,16ff.).

The change which Lancelot has caused in Galahot's outlook is demonstrated when he sees the walls of his favourite castle, Hohfertif Garde, collapse before him.⁴⁴ Galahot's only concern

is whether anyone has been killed (I,488,2ff.). Similarly, when his uncle, Engelbant, reports to him all the strange happenings that have occurred in his lands during his absence, Galahot again states that they are of no consequence, as long as no getruwe frunt have come to harm (I,490,3ff.), and he expatiates on this even more emphatically a little later (I,490,12ff.). As Cynthia Caples comments 'Galahot is also the only character to value men above land, not as a figure of speech (Artus I,530,33-34; II,286,19-20; II,277,15-17 etc.), but as a real choice'.⁴⁵ From his personal experience of friendship with Lancelot Galahot is able to comment generally on the value of friendship. The tone of his remarks aligns them with Phariens' comments about the feudal code, the Lady of the Lake's discourse on chivalry and the sage's advice on the art of kingship, for all four figures contribute to a more philosophical understanding of some of the most important aspects of the Prose Lancelot.

Pauline Matarasso has suggested that Galahot's friendship for Lancelot could be considered 'one of the most "monastic" themes' of the entire Prose Lancelot, 'down to the erotic vocabulary employed to render its intensity'.⁴⁶ Although Matarasso does not substantiate her comment (she makes it in the course of an analysis of the Queste del Saint Graal), she has pointed to a likely influence on the portrayal of Galahot's love for Lancelot. The twelfth century has been called 'the century of friendship'.⁴⁷ While the aristocratic courts were entertained with a new genre of literature about the nature of love, a literature about the nature of friendship was cultivated in the

monasteries. In her study of the cult of friendship in monastic circles Adele Fiske has noticed a confluence of many traditions. She distinguishes two types of friendship, mystical and practical.⁴⁸ She traces the tradition of practical friendship with its emphasis on mutual duties and help through the writings of Socrates, Cicero⁴⁹, St. Jerome, St. Boniface, Servatus Lupus, Gerbert and Bernard of Clairvaux. The development of the mystical tradition of friendship with its emphasis on a vision of God in the friend Fiske traces from Plato and Plotinus through Ambrose, Augustine, Fortunatus, Adalbert of Prague and St. Anselm.⁵⁰ That Galahot sees the working of God in his friendship with Lancelot may well be evidence of monastic influence, for in monastic circles friendship was regarded as the highest form of human love, since in the friend one encounters God.⁵¹ Within the structure of the entire Prose Lancelot this 'monastic' element of Galahot's friendship with Lancelot could be seen, perhaps, to provide an oblique thematic link with the religious atmosphere of the Gral-Queste. However, as this aspect of Galahot's friendship with Lancelot is not developed any further, I would hesitate to attach too much significance to it.

Although Galahot regards Lancelot as a positive influence on the state of his moral virtue, there is none the less a certain ambiguity about his friendship for Lancelot. Lancelot is, after all, the cause of his death (I,597,26ff.), as had been foretold by Helies, when he interpreted Galahot's dream (I,500,5ff.). Galahot's sorrow at Lancelot's supposed death, and his sense of guilt that he was not available when Lancelot sought him in

Sorelois make him resolve to die (I,597,14ff.). Galahot may have abandoned his immoderate overweening political ambition, but he replaces it with his immoderate love for Lancelot, and it is this which causes his death.⁵² In that section of the Lancelot proper which is concerned with Galahot, then, not only is the theme of friendship introduced, but also the theme of immoderation. The effects of immoderation are explored in Galahot's friendship with Lancelot, Lancelot's love for Ginover, Lyonel's attempt at fratricide and Gawan's insistence on a blood feud.⁵³

Although the narrative focuses rather more on Galahot's feelings for Lancelot than Lancelot's for Galahot, the depth of Lancelot's affection for Galahot is none the less made clear. When Lancelot arrives at Galahot's grave, he becomes distraught. The description of his grief exceeds that of Gawan for his brothers (III,567,7ff.) or of Claudas (I,61,25ff.) and Bandemagus (II,114,11ff.) for their respective sons. Lancelot faints and then 'er dreip den meisten jamer den yeman gesehen hett, er zukratzet sin antlitz und zureiss sin cleyder recht ob er unsynnig were' (II,87,20f.). Only the Lady of the Lake's intervention prevents Lancelot himself from dying through sorrow at having caused Galahot's death (II,88,25ff.). He is comforted to learn from the Lady of the Lake that, when he eventually dies, he will be put beside Galahot in Hohfertig Garde (II,88,16ff.).

Lancelot makes his cousin Bohort a present of Galahot's sword (II,111,28ff.). It is fitting that Lancelot should choose to give his great friend's sword to Bohort, for Bohort is devoted

to Lancelot.⁵³ Galahot's friendship is, then, in a sense continued through the figure of Bohort, who emerges as one of the main protagonists in the Lancelot proper after the death of Galahot. Another figure who functions as a continuator of Galahot's friendship for Lancelot is Galahot's vassal, King Bandemagus.

Bandemagus' friendship for Lancelot

Galahot abandoned his political ambition and regarded wealth, lands and honour as secondary to friendship with Lancelot. Bandemagus, however, makes an even greater gesture, for he is able to forgive Lancelot the slaying of his only son Meleagant. Lancelot, it is true, could not be held morally responsible for the death of Meleagant, since Meleagant provoked a confrontation between the pair, in which Lancelot was obliged to fight him in single combat. The narrator leaves us in no doubt that Meleagant is a wicked figure, for he describes him as a verreter and states that Lancelot slew Bandemagus' son 'dorch Meliagantz ubermut willen' (II,115,10). Bandemagus himself was fully aware of Meleagant's treacherous nature (I,632,14ff.), although this knowledge did nothing to assuage his grief at the loss of his son.

A knight called Argondras accuses Lancelot of having killed Meleagant unjustly and he challenges Lancelot to combat at Bandemagus' court. When Lancelot makes his identity known after he is victorious over Argondras, Bandemagus receives him with a great show of affection. It would seem that Bandemagus does not yet know of Meleagant's death at Lancelot's hands, although he has a

presentiment of it (II,104,31ff.). Lancelot attempts to tell Bandemagus that he has slain his son, but Bandemagus will not listen, for he wishes nothing to interfere with his joy at having Lancelot at his court. The narrator comments:

Also trost sich der konig selbs sins grossen lydens und smerczen des er sich versach, das kam zu von hogem und grossem herczen das er inne syme libe drug. Er hielt sin sone wol vor erslagen, noch dan wolt er der glich wenig oder viel bewijsen umb der grossen lieben willen die er zu Lantzelot druge. (II,105,3ff.)

Bandemagus expresses his great desire to have Lancelot's geselleschaft (II,105,17ff.) and declares himself prepared to forgive Lancelot anything in order to be assured of it, even the killing of relatives and the usurpation of lands (II,105,26ff.), two actions which are considered most heinous by the society of the Prose Lancelot and which invariably provoke retaliation and revenge. After agreeing to become Bandemagus' geselle Lancelot departs. He sends a message back to Bandemagus, informing him formally that he killed Meleagant (II,114,8ff.). Bandemagus is greatly distressed by the news of his son's death, but at no point does he express a wish for revenge (II,114,11ff.). It would seem that he consciously avoids confusing his friendship for Lancelot with his paternal love for Meleagant, and he thus averts what would have been an unnecessary conflict of loyalties, for Meleagant was treacherous and was slain by Lancelot in self-defence.

In the further contact he has with Lancelot Bandemagus continues to demonstrate his great affection and respect for him. Thus, when Lancelot arrives to assist Bandemagus in his tournament against the King of Norgales, Bandemagus receives him in a very

respectful manner, causing Lancelot great embarrassment:

Der konig demutigt sich sere gegen Lanceloten und
sprach zu im, er wer syn knecht und syn frunt.
(II,277,11f.)

At a later tournament at Kamalot Bandemagus again demonstrates his eagerness to please Lancelot. When Lancelot (at the Queen's bidding) asks Bandemagus to prolong the tournament against Artus, Bandemagus declares that he would do anything for Lancelot (II,420,20ff.). That Bandemagus is, as was Galahot, as good as his word is demonstrated shortly before the war in Flanders. In a parallel scene to the one in which Artus, Gawan, the Queen and Galahot declared what they would be prepared to give for Lancelot's geselleschafft (I,285,5ff.), Bandemagus, Gawan and other supporters of Lancelot declare what they will give to assist Lancelot in his battle against Claudas. Bandemagus demonstrates the same spirit of generosity that Galahot had shown. He puts all he has, wealth, lands, men and his life, at Lancelot's disposal (II,681,21ff.). It is at this point in the narrative that Bandemagus finally acknowledges that Lancelot slew his son. However, he is not only able to reconcile himself to this fact, but he is also able to forgive Lancelot willingly because of his affection for Lancelot and all the services which Lancelot had rendered him:

' ... Also vil wil ich umb synen willen thun als dem jhenen den ich am liebsten han vor all der welt; und auch darumb nit das er Meliagant mynen son erschlagen hatt, den ich inn der welt allerliebste hatt. Aber er hatt sitt so viel umb mynen willen gethan das ichs im alles williclichen verzyhe.' (II,681,29ff.)

Within the structure of the Prose Lancelot Claudas and Bandemagus emerge as complementary figures. Although their careers

develop independently, there are points of formal similarity between them - notably their feudal status as vassal kings and the loss of their sons at the hands of Ban's kin.⁵⁴ Their paths cross for the first time in the war in Flanders, when Bandemagus is captured by Claudas' men. It is an interesting detail that Bandemagus should incur Claudas' hatred through the very offence which provides a structural link between their persons in the narrative - in the course of the war Bandemagus kills a kinsman of Claudas (II,756,9f.). It is only his status as a king and his value as a hostage which preserves Bandemagus from Claudas' wrath. The prose romancer develops the formal comparison between Claudas and Bandemagus into a comparison between the two men on a thematic level. The compositional elements in the events which precipitate the death of Dorins and Meleagant are the same, but the different arrangement of these elements in each case provides a contrast. Ultimately Claudas is responsible for the death of Dorins, for it is his treacherous usurpation of the lands of Ban's kin which sets in motion the particular train of events which leads to the slaying of Dorins by Lyonel and Bohort. Meleagant is responsible for his own death at Lancelot's hands because of that quality of treachery which he shares with Claudas. The grief which Claudas (I,61,25ff.) and Bandemagus (II,114,11ff.) experience at the death of their sons may be described in the same terms, but their response to their loss differs sharply. Claudas insists on a blood feud, while Bandemagus accepts the blow magnanimously, demonstrating the capacity of friendship to override all else.

Gawan and Artus also suffer bereavements at the hands of Ban's kin. Thus, within the structure of the entire Prose Lancelot Bandemagus' attitude does not only contrast with that of Claudas, but also with that of Artus and, even more so, with that of Gawan.

Artus' friendship for Lancelot

Whereas the quality and strength of Galahot's friendship is expressed in terms of a love relationship, Artus' feelings for Lancelot are consistently identified with familial love. Artus regards the knights of the Round Table generally not just as his gesellen, but also as 'sons' and 'brothers' (II,704,8ff.; III,21,14f.). This is true for no one more than for Lancelot. When in the Lancelot proper Lancelot is presumed dead, the distress Artus feels compels him to express his feelings for Lancelot. He declares that, with the exception of his favourite, Gawan, he would have preferred to have lost all his nephews rather than Lancelot (II,219,26ff.). As the Lancelot proper draws to a close, the references to Lancelot being as dear as a kinsman become more and more frequent. The narrator reports that Artus' love for Lancelot is even greater than that of Lancelot's kin: 'wann inn der welt yn nymands lieber hett dann konig Artus und syn nehsten mäge. Aber uber sie alle hett yn der konig so sere lieb das er uch wunder haben mag' (II,667,27ff.). We learn that Artus treats Lancelot better than a son (II,708,10ff.), and he even declares that he no longer knows whether he loves Gawan or Lancelot more (II,668,1ff.). By expressing his affection for

Lancelot in familial terms Artus equates friendship and kinship.

In noting the common designation of kinsfolk in the twelfth century as amis in France and as frunde in Germany, the historian Marc Bloch comments:

The general assumption seems to have been that there was no real friendship^{sav²} between persons united by blood.

The best-served hero was he whose warriors were all joined to him either by the new, feudal relationship of vassalage, or by the ancient tie of kinship - two equally binding ties which were ordinarily put on the same plane because they seemed to take precedence of all others. Magen und mannen - this alliteration is almost proverbial in the German epic. (55)

In the war which Lancelot wages against Claudas to regain his patrimony, Claudas draws his military support from his kinsmen and vassals.⁵⁶ Lancelot's support, however, is drawn in the first instance from his friends. Artus, Bandemagus and Gawan place their kin and all their vassals at Lancelot's service. The forces which Lancelot has rallied have little difficulty in defeating Claudas' men. The episode of the war in Flanders is a celebration of the power of friendship and bears out Hartmann von Aue's comments about friendship in Iwein:

als ouch die wîsen wellen,
ezn habe deheiniu groezer kraft
danne unsippiu geselleschaft,
gerâte sî ze guote;
und sint sî in ir muote
getriuwe under in beiden,
sô sich gebruoder scheiden. (2702-08) (57)

In the Lancelot proper friendship is presented as a force which is as powerful as the ties of kinship and vassalage.

At the outset of the Gral-Queste Artus again expresses his feelings for Lancelot in familial terms. When his knights prepare to set out on the quest for the Grail, he is greatly

distressed, particularly at the departure of Gawan and Lancelot, both of whom he loves as if they were his sons (III,26,19ff.). In the Tod des König Artus there is, however, a radical shift of emphasis. Whereas before Lancelot was as dear to Artus as Artus' kin, Lancelot now becomes identified very firmly with his own kin. The subsequent polarisation of Artus' and Ban's kin is anticipated by the constant references to the knights in terms of their kin groups (e.g. III,434,6; III,446,15; III,501,12; III,545,12f.).⁵⁸

In the Lancelot proper the mutual love and respect which Lancelot and Artus have for one another (e.g. II,411,1ff.; II,601,17ff.) develops alongside and uninfluenced by the secret adultery of Lancelot and Ginover. The impact on the reader of Lancelot's adultery with Ginover is softened to a certain extent by Artus' own infidelity with Gartissie, the Saxon sorceress, and Genuvere, the false Queen.⁵⁹ And emphasis is given repeatedly to Lancelot's outstanding deeds as a knight (see above p. 262f.). However, there are brief episodes which remind us of the constant tension underlying Lancelot's relationships with Artus and Ginover, for example Lancelot renounces his membership of the Round Table when the Queen is endangered in the 'false Queen' episode (I,526,3ff.); Morgan's failed attempt to expose Lancelot's adultery at court (I,587,6ff.). Furthermore, a thread of irony is developed in the narrative by a number of innocent remarks made by Artus. Artus tells Galahot that he would give half of all he had for Lancelot's geselleschaft, except his wife (I,285,8ff.). However, when Morgane's messenger

attempts to expose Lancelot's adultery at court and the Queen makes a magnificent speech in Lancelot's defence, Artus declares his trust in Lancelot and even goes on to say:

'... Wann hett ich Lancelot ycz by mir als ich yn zu wilen gehabt han, er möcht des nit gethun darumb ich yn hassen wolt. Ich wolt auch das ich sin gesellschaft ummer mocht haben in den worten das er uch zu wib geaufft hett, ob es uch beiden lieb were.' (I,588,34ff.)

And on another occasion, when Lancelot is being praised for his service to ladies, Artus comments in jest:

'Frauw, frauw, so helff mir gott, ich kan yn nit zu sere geloben, aber wer es ein ander ritter und were uwer bule, so gleubent mir nit ob ich uch darumb schült, wann ir mochtent wol ubeler thun.'
(II,397,16ff.)

However, when in the Tod des König Artus Morgane shows Artus the record Lancelot painted of his love relationship with the Queen whilst he was held captive by Morgane, Artus feels disgraced and swears as a king to avenge his honour (III,470,8ff.). The respect and friendship Artus felt for Lancelot have no influence in this conflict of interests. Although it is painful to Artus that such a good knight as Lancelot could be guilty of such conduct (III,536,17ff.), Artus does not swerve from his decision to avenge his honour.

The issue of Lancelot's adultery with Ginover is complicated by the slaying of Artus' nephews, Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries, by Lancelot and Bohort. Artus is outraged that the friend he had treated 'recht als were er von unserm geschlecht gewest' (III,573,2) has slain his kin and he demands vengeance. He laments the loss of what can never be returned:

' ... Das ist rechter verlust und rechter schade der mir ist zukomen, wann als es geschiecht das eyner verlúset syn lant mit verrethniss oder mit gewalt, das ist ein ding das man wol wiedder gewinnen mag zu manchen stunden. Wann es darzu kúmet das ein man verlúset syn frunde der er nit wiedder gewinnen mag, das ist ein gross verlust; dann ist der schad als gross das man es núnner men gebessern mag in keynerley wyse. ... ' (III,572,9ff.)

The words in which Artus couches his lament for his kin resemble closely what Galahot had to say in the Lancelot proper on the loss of friends:

'Umb lant oder umb gút das ich verliesen mag wil ich nummer gezurnen', sprach Galahot, 'bin ich selb biederbe, das mag ich genung gewinnen. Wann als ein man einen getruwen frunt hatt, den er fur alle frunde erkorn hat, und er den verluset, den schaden mag er nymer erkobern noch mag sin nymer vergessen, ob er biederman ist. ...' (I,485,15ff.) (60)

Lancelot may have been as dear as a kinsman to Artus, but there is no hesitation in Artus' ordering of loyalties when a critical situation arises. However, the semantic ambiguity of the word frunt allows the prose romancer to invoke the memory of Galahot's magnanimous friendship for Lancelot at the very moment when Artus feels that he has been betrayed by his friend Lancelot. Although Artus may observe loyalty to his kin, we are reminded by the verbal echo in Artus' speech of Galahot's earlier speech that friendship can be an equally powerful force, as Lancelot himself will demonstrate to Artus.

The crisis caused by the strong suspicion of Lancelot's relationship with Ginover is resolved by Lancelot returning the Queen to Artus, feigning innocence of the adultery of which he is accused (III,615,4ff.). After the papal intervention in the affairs of Artus, Lancelot sacrifices his relationship with the

Queen for the sake of her honour (III,609,5ff.). In doing so he wins our sympathy, for Bohort spells out to Lancelot the pain his sacrifice will cause him (III,610,2ff.). Artus is satisfied with the return of Ginover and it appears as if the war between Ban's kin and Artus' will cease (III,612,1ff.), but Gawan is relentless in his desire to avenge his brothers and he presses Artus to continue hostilities with Lancelot. From this point on Lancelot's adultery with Ginover is no longer of consequence. The dominating factor in the narrative becomes Gawan's thirst for revenge. In the course of the action which Gawan pursues the focus of interest becomes centred increasingly on Lancelot's unwavering friendship for Artus and Gawan.

It is true that Lancelot and Bohort deliberately attack and slay Agravant and Guerehes, but this was done in the defence of the Queen. When Lancelot returns the Queen to Artus, Artus must acknowledge the apparent innocence of the Queen, and, therefore, the disloyalty of Agravant and Guerehes in attempting to defame Ginover (III,614,12ff.). Where these two nephews of Artus are concerned, any case for a blood feud against Lancelot and Bohort falls. The death of Gaheries is another matter. Whereas Agravant and Guerehes had been largely negative figures throughout the Trilogy, Gaheries was a positive one.⁶¹ He was the favourite of Gawan, and after Gawan, Artus' favourite nephew. He was also a good friend of Lancelot. An analysis of the circumstances which surround Gaheries' death reveals that it was the result of an unfortunate sequence of events. The King had had to coerce Gaheries into being present when the Queen was led

to the stake, as Gaheries did not want to see the Queen die or to take up arms against Lancelot (III,553,10ff.). In the struggle which ensues during the rescue of the Queen, Lancelot does not recognise Gaheries and thus kills him unwittingly. As Lancelot did not intend and certainly had no desire to kill his friend Gaheries (III,558,7ff.), the vengeance sought by Artus and Gawan seems unreasonable. In the context of the entire Prose Lancelot the pursuit of revenge by Gawan in particular seems even more negative. Gawan's blind insistence on a blood feud recalls the revenge Claudas, a negative figure in the narrative and Lancelot's enemy, sought for Dorins' death. Furthermore, Gawan's reaction contrasts with Bandemagus' noble conduct over the death of his son at the hands of his friend Lancelot.

The friendship which Artus expressed earlier for Lancelot has no influence on his immediate response to the death of his nephews. Lancelot, however, refuses to look upon Artus as anything less than his friend. He is greatly distressed by the imminent battle between his kin and Artus', for he loves Artus dearly (III,589,9ff.). Lancelot sends a message to Artus re-affirming his friendship for him. He declares that, though he will attack and defend with his men, under no circumstances will he injure Artus himself and, indeed, he will do everything he can to protect the King (III,585,10ff.). He shows his integrity by fulfilling the promise of his words, for, when Hestor unhorses Artus in battle, Lancelot protects Artus from Hestor who would have Lancelot kill the King (III,605,7ff.). Artus is greatly moved by Lancelot's magnanimity towards him:

' ... Nu wolt ich, als helff mir got, das der krieg
nye were angehoben, wann er hat hüt myn hercz me
verwünt mit gúte dann alle die welt het mit macht
oder mit stercke gethan.' (III,606,6ff.)

Gawan, however, is unrelenting. He insists that Lancelot and his kin return to their own lands and that the battle be recommenced on their soil (III,616,2ff.). Lancelot reminds Artus how he rescued Artus from defeat by making Galahot his vassal (III,618,7ff.) and Gawan how he rescued him from his imprisonment in the tower of Rosegart (III,619,4ff.), thus calling attention to the debt they both owe him. But, unlike Bandedmagus, who was prepared to forgive Lancelot the death of his son in view of all his service to him (II,681,29ff.), Artus and Gawan, in particular, remain obdurate. Lancelot is constant in his affections, as is demonstrated by his prayer for a blessing on Logres, as he departs from the land he loves (III,623,1ff.).

The battle between the two kin groups is eventually halted when Gawan decides to challenge Lancelot to single combat. Lancelot makes a final attempt to effect peace. He asserts that he did not knowingly kill Gaheries and declares himself prepared to become Gawan's vassal and, should Gawan wish it, to go into exile for ten years (III,666,3ff.). To become Gawan's vassal was the greatest gesture in his own terms that Lancelot could make, for throughout his career he had striven to maintain his autonomy. He declares himself prepared to take this step to win back Gawan's geselleschafft (III,667,5ff.). Lancelot's magnanimity recalls that of Galahot; for the sake of friendship both men are prepared to abase themselves, in spite of the fact that they are the superior in power. Artus recognises the

greatness of Lancelot's offer and exhorts Gawan to accept:

'Lieber nefe, thünt als uch Lanczelot bittet, wann
sicherlich, er enbütet uch alle die bescheydenheit die
keyn ritter dem andern bitten mag umb keynes synes
frundes willen der da erschlagen were. ...'
(III,668,2ff.)

Gawan, however, persists in wishing to fight Lancelot. Lancelot eventually overcomes Gawan, but refuses to kill him. Hestor is astounded at Lancelot's attitude and reminds him that it is his duty to uphold the honour of his kin (III,685,5ff.)⁶² But again Lancelot demonstrates the value he places on friendship and in doing so he wins Artus' recognition of him as the best knight he had ever seen (III,685,2ff.). His wonder at Lancelot's behaviour is as great as it was at Galahot's (I,280,25ff.).

Throughout the course of the battle between Ban's and Artus' kin Lancelot emerges a noble figure in the way he honours his friendship with Artus and Gawan.⁶³ That Lancelot's attitude is the morally correct one is made clear by Gawan's repentance of his behaviour towards Lancelot shortly before his death. He asks that the inscription on his tomb read as follows:

"Hie lyt Gahariet und herre Gawin, die herre
Lanczlot erschlög umb herrn Gawins hoffart."
(III,714,6ff.)

And in his final battle against Morderet Artus laments greatly the absence of Lancelot amongst his men (III,750,6ff.). After all the richness of theme contained within the Prose Lancelot⁶⁴, it is with the theme of friendship that the Trilogy closes. Lancelot is buried next to his great friend, Galahot, (III,785, 12ff.), and our last impression of the Prose Lancelot is of the strength of friendship.

CONCLUSION

Within the structure of the Prose Lancelot Artus, Claudas, Galahot and Bandemagus form a configuration of rulers, with Artus at its centre. Comparison between these four men is suggested by their role as rulers and, most importantly, by their respective relationships with Lancelot. The society of the Prose Lancelot is structured according to the ties of kinship and vassalage. The social implications of the feudal bond and loyalty to one's kin are investigated through the figures of the four rulers. At the same time it is through the association of these men with Lancelot that the more personal tie of friendship is explored. In the course of the Trilogy friendships are juxtaposed with and brought into conflict with feudal and familial relationships. Although Galahot, Claudas and Bandemagus have no role to play in the Tod des König Artus, many of the major issues of the final romance are foreshadowed and debated in the Lancelot proper through these figures.

The feudal relationship between lord and vassal is explored most exhaustively through Claudas' dealings with his squire and Phariens. The dictates and constraints of the feudal bond are revealed in particular through Phariens, who struggles to honour allegiance both to Claudas and King Bohort's sons and to observe loyalty to his kin through his nephew Lambegus. Phariens' deliberations about how he might best observe his various loyalties is reflected to some extent in the problems Gawan faces in honouring his various obligations to Artus as his nephew, vassal and Round Table knight. Feudal ties are more important

for Gawan than for Lancelot. With regard to Lancelot's feudal relationship with Artus the narrative emphasis is placed consistently on Artus' obligations to Lancelot rather than Lancelot's towards Artus.

One of the most remarkable and recurrent features of Lancelot's personality is his ability to inspire great friendship. He becomes the loved and respected geselle of Galahot, Artus, Bandemagus and Gawan. The theme of friendship which extends throughout the Prose Lancelot begins with Galahot's remarkable love for Lancelot. In its detail and analysis the account of the genesis, growth and influence of Galahot's friendship with Lancelot is comparable to the examination of the feudal relationship between Claudas and Phariens.

Whereas the quality and strength of Galahot's friendship with Lancelot is expressed in terms more readily used of a love relationship, Artus' feelings for Lancelot are consistently identified with familial love. Throughout the Lancelot proper Lancelot's friendship with Artus develops alongside and uninfluenced by his adultery with the Queen. It is not until the Tod des König Artus that the two relationships are brought into conflict when suspicion of Lancelot's adultery with the Queen is made public. The issue of Lancelot's adultery with the Queen is further complicated by his slaying of Artus' nephews, in particular Gaheries, during his rescue of the Queen. However, Lancelot's return of the Queen to Artus for the sake of her honour leaves the violation of the kinship tie at the centre of the narrative. Although Artus must acknowledge Agravant's and

Guerehes' disloyalty to the Queen in accepting her back and although Lancelot's slaying of Gaheries was unwitting, Artus, at Gawan's bidding, insists on a blood feud. Lancelot may have been as dear as a kinsman to Artus, but there is no hesitation in Artus' ordering of loyalties when a crisis arises.

Within the context of the entire Prose Lancelot this insistence on a blood feud is blackened further by analogy with the pursuit of revenge by Claudas, a negative figure in the narrative and Lancelot's enemy, for the death of his son at the hands of Ban's kin. Furthermore Artus' and Gawan's response contrasts unfavourably with Bandemagus' noble conduct over the death of his son. The contrast is made all the more damning in that Artus and Gawan were, like Bandemagus, friends of Lancelot. The more Gawan insists on vengeance, the more Lancelot's stature in the narrative is enhanced, for he meets all Gawan's hatred with friendship. He demonstrates how highly he values Artus and Gawan as friends in his resolute determination to injure neither man. Lancelot's readiness to abase himself to Gawan for the sake of their friendship recalls that magnanimous spirit which Galahot demonstrated in his friendship for Lancelot.

In the Prose Lancelot, then, friendship is a force as powerful as feudal allegiance and loyalty to one's kin. Various permutations of the integration of these three forces are worked out through relationships of Artus, Claudas, Galahot and Bandemagus and comparison is suggested between these relationships by the narrative devices of juxtaposition, parallelism, analogy, contrast and verbal echo. Although in the Lancelot proper

emphasis is given to the inspiration which Lancelot draws from the Queen, the theme of friendship is developed simultaneously through the friendships of Artus, Galahot and Bandemagus with Lancelot. In the Tod des König Artus the tensions developed in the Lancelot proper surface together and conflict between Ban's kin and Artus' is precipitated. However, after events have taken their course, it is Lancelot's assertion of friendship which remains as the final impression. The ambivalence which surrounds Lancelot's love for the Queen has been set aside and the Trilogy closes with Lancelot an unqualified hero. He is buried next to his great friend Galahot and the inscription on the grave reads:

'Hie lyt Galaat von den Ferren Inselen und
herre Lanczlot von dem Lach, der da was
der beste ritter der ye in das konigrich von
Logres kam, sunder alleyn Galaat syn son.'
(III, 785, 12ff.)

Notes to Chapter Four

1. Elspeth Kennedy, 'King Arthur in the First Part of the Prose Lancelot', in Medieval Miscellany presented to Eugène Vinaver (Manchester, 1965), pp. 186-95, discusses the contradictory aspects of the portrayal of King Arthur.
2. Lancelot, Roman en prose du XIIIe siècle, edited by A. Micha, 9 vols (Paris, 1978-83).
3. J. Frappier, 'Le Personnage de Galehaut dans le Lancelot en Prose', RPh, 17 (1963/64), 535-54 (p. 544). Lancelot's exceptional nature is also manifested in a physical detail. He has an abnormally large chest to accommodate his great heart (I,35,21ff.).
4. J.N. Carman, A Study of the Pseudo-Map Cycle of Arthurian Romance (Kansas, 1973), p. 26.
5. See N.H. Clement, 'An Aspect of the World-Conquest Motif in Literature', MPh, 24 (1926/27), 129-40. Clement mentions the Prose Lancelot briefly (pp. 134-35) in tracing the development of the world-conquest motif in Western literature.
6. This devious aspect of Claudas' nature is reinforced by the fact that he sends spies to Artus' court on two other occasions (II,555,4ff.; II,684,16ff.).
7. See Ch. 2, p. 120ff.
8. Elspeth Kennedy, 'Social and political ideas in the French Prose Lancelot', Med.Aev., 26 (1957), 90-106 (pp. 100-06). See also M. Keen, Chivalry (New Haven, Connecticut/London, 1984), pp. 6-7, p. 9, p. 151.
9. Kennedy, 'Social and political ideas', pp. 96-100.
10. For a study of the theory and the practice of feudal chivalry in the Prose Lancelot see Cynthia Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry in the Prose Lancelot' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Harvard, 1970), (DAI, A32 (1971), p. 1505).

11. C. Morris, The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200 (London, 1972), comments (p. 26): 'Victory in war, combined with generosity and faithfulness to his warrior nobles, were above all the things which made a successful ruler'. Morris is talking here about monarchs of the period 900-1050, but his comments on the desirable qualities in a ruler are relevant to a discussion of the portrayal of rulers in the Prose Lancelot.
12. Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry', comments (p. 167): 'Thus the sage's advice on generosity confirms what P (i.e. the MHG text) specifies, that despite his munificence, the king must avoid yielding his own territorial sovereignty or lose his authority over land and volk alike.'
13. See the section on friendship which follows later in this chapter.
14. See Ch. 2, p. 124.
15. Although the comparison of Galahot to Solomon is probably purely conventional, it is interesting that in the Gral-Queste Solomon is portrayed as a forefather of Lancelot.
16. On the narrative device of interlacing see Ch. 1, p. 53ff.
17. Claudas' closest companions are often unnamed squires whom he has brought up from childhood and whom he therefore regards as dependents. In addition to the squire mentioned here see II,557,2ff. and II,774,22ff.
18. See Ch. 2, p. 96f.
19. Kennedy, 'Social and political ideas', p. 92.
20. Kennedy, 'Social and political ideas', p. 93. The Coutumes de Beauvaisis was drafted about 1280-83, i.e. later than the composition of the Prose Lancelot (1215-30). Kennedy's aim is 'not to determine the precise sources of the Prose Lancelot, but to relate its ideas to general thirteenth-century theory' (p. 91). What is intriguing is the mutual influence of fictional and non-fictional writing, for it seems that Beaumanoir knew the Prose Lancelot.

21. Phariens' attack on a close kinsman has a parallel in the Gral-Queste in Lyonel's attack on his brother. The theme of uncontrolled zorn is explored most fully in the figure of Lyonel. See Ch. 3, pp. 175-76.
22. See my introductory chapter, p. 5ff.
23. See Ch. 3, p. 151.
24. Artus is also bidden on the oath of loyalty he owes to his knights (e.g. I,307,13f.).
25. See Ch. 3, p. 194.
26. See my introductory chapter, p. 2ff.
27. See Ch. 2, n. 66.
28. See Elspeth Kennedy, 'King Arthur in the First Part of the Prose Lancelot', pp. 186-88.
29. I refer to these points in summary as I have discussed them in greater detail in Ch. 3 (p. 159ff.).
30. On this point see, F. Lot, Etude sur le Lancelot en prose, second edition (Paris, 1954), pp. 90-92; Kennedy, 'King Arthur in the First Part of the Prose Lancelot', p. 189 and Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry', p. 176ff.
31. Xenja von Ertzdorff, 'Höfische Freundschaft', DU, 14 (1962), 35-51 (p. 51).
32. See the relevant entries for frunt, mâc, geselle in M. Lexer, Mittelhochdeutsches Taschenwörterbuch, thirty-third edition (Stuttgart, 1972).
33. P.W. Krawutschke, 'Liebe, Ehe und Familie im deutschen Prosa-Lancelot I' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1976), (DAI, A37 (1976), pp. 1537-38), has listed in an appendix to his dissertation the occurrences of the word frunt meaning friend and meaning kinsman in the first volume of Kluge's edition of the Prose Lancelot.
34. W. Harms, Der Kampf mit dem Freund oder Verwandten in der deutschen Literatur bis um 1300, Medium Aevum. Philologische Studien, 1 (Munich, 1963), p. 15.

35. See Ch. 3, pp. 153-54.
36. See also II,157,5f.; II,271,11; II,277,14; II,678,25f.
37. See Ch. 2, p. 122f.
38. Ertzdorff, 'Höfische Freundschaft', p. 49.
39. When the brothers of Challot seek to become his gesellen, Lancelot issues a similar warning to them: 'Ir herren, ich nemen uch zu myner gesellschaft. Aber wissent das ich nit mag allewegen by uch gesyn, wann ich muss dick von uch scheiden ferre alleyn, also das ir nit wissent wo ich sy komen' (III,473,12ff.).
40. Ertzdorff, 'Höfische Freundschaft', p. 51.
41. See Ch. 3, pp. 192-95.
42. Kennedy, 'King Arthur in the First Part of the Prose Lancelot', makes this point (pp. 189-90), as does C. Chase, 'Etude sur la Première Partie du Lancelot en Prose Roman du XIIIe Siècle', (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1977), (DAI, A38 (1977/78), p. 2830), p. 123.
43. This is an instance of the prose romancer avoiding a direct conflict between Artus and Lancelot in the Lancelot proper and building up instead Lancelot's stature in the romance. See in this connection, Ch. 2, 'The theme of adultery', p. 94ff.
44. The collapse of the walls of Galahot's favourite castle in front of him recalls the scene where Ban watched his favourite castle, Trebe, burn (I,12,16ff.).
45. Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry', pp. 170-71.
46. Pauline Matarasso, The Redemption of Chivalry. A Study of the Queste del Saint Graal (Geneva, 1979), p. 160.
47. Morris, Discovery of the Individual, p. 96.
48. Adele M. Fiske, Friends and Friendship in the Monastic Tradition, Centro Intercultural de Documentacion, 51 (1970), p. 13.
49. Ertzdorff, 'Höfische Freundschaft' notes (p. 36) that Cicero's

De amicitia was part of the curriculum of the schools in the twelfth century. She discusses (pp. 36-7, p. 51) briefly what the höfische Freundschaft of Gawain and the hero-knight in the verse romances owed to the monastic tradition of friendship.

50. On the mystical tradition of friendship see also J. Chydenius, 'The Symbolism of Love in Medieval Thought', Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 44, No. 1 (1970), 7-68.
51. See Fiske, Friends and Friendship, on Bernard of Clairvaux, p. 16/41.
52. J. Frappier, 'Le Personnage de Galehaut' comments, 'Pour lui (Galehaut), comme plus tard pour Gauvain dans la Mort Artu, Lancelot est l'instrument de la vengeance divine' (p. 543). I am not convinced, however, that this interpretation is entirely valid, for Lancelot himself almost dies of sorrow over Galahot's death. It is only the intervention of the Lady of the Lake which saves his life (II, 88, 25ff.).
53. See Ch. 3, pp. 175-76.
54. See Ch. 2, pp. 120ff.
55. M. Bloch, Feudal Society, translated by L.A. Manyon, 2 vols, second edition (London, 1975), I, 124.
56. On the composition of Lancelot's and Claudas' armies see Caples, 'Feudal Chivalry', p. 100 and M.L.P. Stoeher, 'The War in Flanders: Themes and Structure of an Episode in the "Prosa-Lancelot"' (unpublished dissertation, University of Michigan, 1978), (DAI, A39 (1978), p. 3569), pp. 37-42.
57. Hartmann von Aue, Iwein, edited by G.F. Benecke, K. Lachmann, seventh edition revised by L. Wolff, with a parallel modern German translation and notes by T. Cramer (Berlin, 1968).
58. See Ch. 3, pp. 217-21.
59. See Ch. 2, p. 95f.
60. Although this passage occurs in Le Livre de Lancelot del Lac,

edited by H.O. Sommer, Vols. III, IV, V (Washington, 1910, 1911, 1912) - see Kluge's apparatus to I, 485, 15ff. - it does not occur in Lancelot do Lac. The Non-Cyclic Old French Prose Romance, edited by Elspeth Kennedy, 2 vols (Oxford, 1980), nor in Micha's edition of the Lancelot proper (see n. 2).

61. See Ch. 3, pp. 181-88
62. There is a structural parallel with Lambegus' astonishment at Phariens' defence of Claudas (I, 67, 23ff.). Phariens honours his feudal loyalty to Claudas even in the face of opposition from the subjects of Gaune and his nephew Lambegus.
63. J. Frappier, Etude sur la Mort le Roi Artu, roman du XIIIe siècle, dernière partie du Lancelot en prose, second revised edition (Paris/Geneva, 1961), aptly describes the emphasis placed on Lancelot's friendship for Gawan and Artus after he has restored Ginover to the King as his 'ascension morale' (p. 234).
64. See Ch. 1, p. 48.

C O N C L U S I O N

Now that I have completed my three studies of how certain relationships (i.e. fathers and sons, brothers and cousins, friends and rulers) are patterned in the Prose Lancelot, it is time to draw some general conclusions from my investigations. However, before I do so, I wish to return to the point from which I started and to reiterate the parameters within which I set this thesis.¹

Although the three constituent romances of the Prose Lancelot are so very different in content, tone and spirit, they are none the less interdependent and undoubtedly best understood when read together. Research into the structural organisation of the Prose Lancelot began with the vexed question of the authorship of the Trilogy. Opinion has ranged from regarding the Prose Lancelot as a number of disparate parts welded together by interpolators and redactors to seeing it as the work of one man. Of the hypotheses advanced Jean Frappier's 'architect' theory (i.e. that there was a man who planned the entire Prose Lancelot, wrote part of it and directed others in the composition of the rest of it) has been most widely accepted. During the last twenty years there has been less interest in the authorship of the Prose Lancelot than in how the structural unity of the work has been achieved. Ferdinand Lot's recognition of the principe d'entrelacement and the procédé du chronologique as the two fundamental narrative techniques employed in the Prose Lancelot laid the foundations upon which subsequent research

into the structural organisation of the Trilogy has built.

Interlacing is a narrative device which intertwines and interweaves the actions of a number of figures. The reader follows one line of action only to find it interrupted by another and that perhaps by yet another. The interruptions may continue, but the reader will eventually find himself at some point returned to the original line of action, which will probably be interrupted again (and again). Within the history of Arthurian romance the use of interlacing can be traced back to the origins of the genre, namely the works of Chrétien de Troyes. In both Le Chevalier de la Charrette and Le Conte du Graal Chrétien used interlacing to link two parallel series of adventures. The Prose Lancelot extended the use of interlacing to embrace and control within one work a multiplicity of knights and their adventures.

The verse romancer ostensibly understood his function as a poet to be to relate the events of the tale as he found them in his source, to illuminate the meaning he perceived within them and to present this, in Chrétien's words, in 'une mout bele conjointure', a pleasing union of form and content. It became a convention of the verse romances that the two levels of the narrative, the events and their meaning, were in part controlled by the persona of a narrator who sought to involve and to guide his audience. The persona of this narrator all but disappears in the Prose Lancelot, for the adoption of a chronicle framework virtually excludes overt intervention, the room for comment. In the absence of a narrator who could be used to some extent as

a cipher to shape and illuminate the text, the prose romancer developed more fully another technique which the verse romancer had employed to convey meaning, i.e. the presentation and arrangement of the narrative itself. Characteristic of the narrative of the verse romances was the emphasis which was placed on rhythm, symmetry, gradation and proportion. While the bipartite construction of the verse romance became the polyphony of the prose romances, the 'architectural' arrangement of the verse narrative was developed into the sophisticated tool of thematic development by analogy in the Prose Lancelot.

The narrative device of interlacing in the Prose Lancelot operates on two levels. It determines, develops and structures the pattern of the narrative action as it pursues and interweaves the adventures and experiences of a large number of figures. Simultaneously it allows thematic development by analogy. An understanding of how this works has become one of the interpretative keys to the Prose Lancelot. It is in the Gral-Queste that thematic development by analogy is most easily observed, for there the narrative has only one focus, the quest for the Grail. The pattern created by the action is thus more readily perceived than in the more diverse Lancelot proper or in the concentration of perspective found in the Tod des König Artus. In the Gral-Queste the adventures of various knights of the Round Table who set out on the quest for the Grail are seen in relation to one another. Through the comparison and contrast which the juxtaposition of their adventures suggests it becomes clear that the degree of the knights' success is both a measure of their

own spiritual awareness and that of their companions.

Thematic development by analogy is facilitated by the narrative device of interlacing, but it is certainly not the sole means by which it is achieved in the Prose Lancelot. It is a narrative feature which pervades the entire structure of the Trilogy. One aspect of this analogical structure that has received little attention, but which contributes much to the cohesion of the work, is the constellations formed by many of the main protagonists within the compass of the entire Prose Lancelot. The interesting feature about these constellations is that they are created less by the interaction of the protagonists than by virtue of particular relationships which they have in common. The focus of my thesis has been to investigate how the related narrative devices of juxtaposition, parallelism and analogy are employed not only to forge links between the discrete experiences of certain figures within the events of the Prose Lancelot, but also to compare and contrast their responses to analogous situations on a thematic level.

As a Germanist I have based my thesis on the MHG version of the Prose Lancelot, regarding it as a variant of the OF text, and, it would seem, an early one.² I have consulted the editions of the OF Prose Lancelot wherever the German text is obscure, but otherwise I have studied the MHG version as a coherent work of art. In my investigations I have looked for continuity in the Trilogy rather than for discrepancy. Sufficient attention has been drawn in the course of debate about the authorship of the Trilogy to discrepancies in the plot of the

Prose Lancelot³, whereas there is still much to be discovered about how the Trilogy functions as a coherent narrative work. A greater understanding of the narrative and thematic structure of the Trilogy should eventually assist in a more accurate assessment than has hitherto been possible of how the Prose Lancelot evolved.⁴ I offer the conclusions which I have drawn from my three studies of how relationships in the Prose Lancelot are patterned as a contribution to this.

In its broadest terms the Prose Lancelot is about the impact of King Ban's lineage with its Grail connections on the world of Arthurian chivalry. To relate this the prose romancer drew comprehensively on the various strands of Arthurian literature which were current at the time he was writing. In his work he encompasses the history of Artus' reign, the development and decline of the company of the Round Table, the history of the Grail and how the quest for it was achieved.⁵ The narrative focus of the prose romancer's sources differed markedly. While the verse romances centred on the adventures and development of an individual hero knight, the pseudo-historical chronicles related the epic history of the Britons under the reign of King Arthur and the Grail legend recounted the individual exploits of various knights within a collective quest of universal significance. The integration of these different focuses in the Prose Lancelot is achieved primarily through the chivalric figure of Lancelot. In the secular context of Arthurian chivalry, as portrayed in the verse romances, Lancelot is the foremost knight at the Round Table and the best knight errant in the world. Within the feudal

context of Artus' reign Lancelot's father is Artus' vassal, and Lancelot himself offers the King invaluable assistance in his feudal battles. He is also, through his adultery with the Queen, instrumental in triggering off the events which lead to Artus' death in his war against Morderet, as recounted by Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace. Finally, it is through the genealogical construct of Lancelot as the father of the Grail winner, Galaat, that Arthurian history is intertwined with the Grail legend.

The prose romancer set himself a particularly complex task in his choice of Lancelot as the hero-knight through whose figure the histories of Arthur's reign and the Grail legend would be linked, for Lancelot was a problematic figure in one of his main sources, Chrétien de Troyes' Le Chevalier de la Charrette. In this work Lancelot exemplifies the convention of courtly love which was introduced by the Troubadours in Provence and developed further at the courts of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Marie de Champagne. He demonstrates how the love of a lady is a source of the greatest inspiration in the execution of chivalric tasks. However, in Lancelot's adultery with the Queen the literary convention of courtly love is stretched to its limits. The prose romancer has incorporated into his work the central tension of Chrétien's romance. In the Lancelot proper the more Lancelot loves the Queen the better a knight he becomes, but, paradoxically, the greater his offence against the King. Lancelot is the best knight in the world through his love for Ginover, but through that same love he is also the supreme traitor. It was an audacious thought to consider making such a knight the father of the pure

and virgin Grail winner, Galaat, particularly as it meant a radical break with tradition, since Perceval had until then been the established Grail knight.

If the prose romancer wished to avoid making a travesty out of the figure of the Grail winner, he clearly had to be very circumspect in how he presented Lancelot's adultery with the Queen. In the Prose Lancelot Lancelot himself never suffers any pangs of conscience about his offence against Artus. As Myrhha Lot-Borodine comments: 'On s'étonne de la dignité si calme de la sécurité de Lancelot, jamais troublé ou hésitant en face de celui dont il possède la femme.'⁶ However, it would seem that the prose romancer anticipated many objections in the minds of his audience, for he employs many diverse strategies in order to present his hero-knight in the most positive light possible. This became particularly apparent to me in the course of my examination of the patterning of relationships in the Prose Lancelot.

The centrality of the figure of Lancelot within the diversity of the Trilogy is reinforced by three dominant constellations of figures in the narrative structure of the Prose Lancelot. These three constellations are patterned on relationships which circumscribe Lancelot's identity, i.e. Lancelot as father, as cousin and half-brother and as friend. Through the portrayal of sets of fathers and sons, brothers and cousins, and friends the prose romancer explores further issues which are fundamental to Lancelot's portrayal. Through analogous relationships and situations he is able to define more closely where the emphasis lies in his delineation of the ambivalence

which attaches to the figure of Lancelot.

The prose romancer's primary concern in his portrayal of Lancelot as the father of the Grail winner is to establish Galaat as the heir to all that good in Lancelot and to dissociate him from Lancelot's sin. To do this he had to meet the issues of adultery and illegitimacy which the complex and problematic concept of Lancelot as the Grail knight's father raised. Adultery and bastardy are themes which are germane to the legend about King Arthur, for Arthur was himself conceived out of wedlock.⁷ The prose romancer has incorporated this aspect of the legend about Arthur into his work and has developed it further. Artus is not only born illegitimate, but he fathers two bastards himself, Lohos and Morderet. Both Lancelot and Artus are guilty of adultery, but a distinction is drawn between the quality of their respective love relationships. Whereas the inspiration which Lancelot draws from his love for the Queen enables him to perform deeds which redound to the honour of Artus' court, Artus' adultery causes political crises. Although Lancelot is an adulterer, he is chaste in his fidelity to the Queen. By contrast Artus has four extra-marital relationships. This contrast between Lancelot's fidelity and Artus' amorous proclivities is emphasised by the pattern of chaste conduct which emerges from the accounts of the careers of Lancelot's kin. Furthermore, although Ban, Lancelot and Bohort all have illegitimate sons, we learn that in all three cases magic was practised on the father and he was thus an unwitting accomplice to the act of conception. No such excuse is offered for the

fathering of Lohos and Morderet by Artus.

The contrast between Lancelot and Artus culminates in the diametrically opposed nature of their respective offspring. Both Galaat and Morderet are born out of wedlock in extraordinary circumstances and both exercise an irrevocable influence on the Arthurian world. However, while Galaat completes the quest for the Grail for which the Round Table was founded and leads his father towards salvation, Morderet brings about the end of Artus' reign and the death of his father. Closely associated with the themes of adultery and illegitimacy in the Trilogy are the themes of the visitation of the sins of the fathers upon the children and the interaction of hereditary influence and self-determination. Although Galaat's noble lineage is seen as a positive factor in his portrayal, the emphasis in his delineation falls none the less on the individual's responsibility for his personal success and salvation. This emphasis is glossed further by a contrast which becomes a recurrent feature of the narrative, that is the difference in nature between fathers and their sons (e.g. Claudas-Claudin; Bandemagus-Meleagant).

An analysis of the identity of the main protagonists reveals that one of the major organising principles of the narrative structure of the Prose Lancelot is kinship. The majority of knights whose presence is constant in the work belong either to the house of Ban or of Artus. This structural principle has significance on a thematic level, for through contrasting the knights of Ban's and Artus' kin the prose romancer illuminates further his concept of Lancelot as the best knight in the world

until the advent of Galaat. The superiority of Ban's kin over Artus' is extolled throughout the narrative.

The prose romancer follows the convention of the verse romances in portraying Gawan as an exemplar of chivalric excellence at Artus' court, the King's favourite nephew and his loyal vassal, while he casts Lancelot in the role of the young unknown knight who has to prove himself. This contrast is extended to their kin. Thus Agravant, Guerehes and Gaheries have a set personality in the text, whereas Lyonel, Bohort and Hestor must strive to create their reputations. Although Lancelot's and Gawan's kin all have their own distinct personalities, their primary function in the narrative is to amplify, illuminate and explore further Lancelot and Gawan's nature and temperament.

Through a series of parallel adventures experienced by Lancelot's and Gawan's kin the prose romancer is able to gloss further the ambivalence of Lancelot's relationship with the Queen and his fathering of Galaat. A particular contrast is thus drawn between the two kin groups in adventures which reveal their attitude to the service of ladies and their ability to succeed in the quest for the Grail. The chaste conduct of Ban's kin in the patterning of fathers and sons is reinforced by the exemplary behaviour of Lyonel, Hestor and Bohort towards ladies in the execution of their chivalric duties. On the other hand the amorous proclivities of Artus are reflected in the behaviour of Gawan and his brothers.

Alongside the original tension inherent in the tale of Lancelot as told by Chrétien de Troyes, i.e. Lancelot's adultery with Artus' Queen, the prose romancer introduces a second tension which is at least as significant in determining the final course of events in the Trilogy, that is the violation of the blood tie. Contact between the houses of Ban and Artus is established primarily through their membership of the Round Table. The noble ideal of a brotherhood of knights is superimposed upon ties of kinship. However, underlying the harmonious relations between Lancelot's and Gawan's kin is a current of tension which is indicated in the Lancelot proper on those occasions when Lancelot and his kin find themselves inadvertently ranged against Gawan and his. Discovery of the opponent's identity causes great distress, but through good fortune a blood feud is never incurred. In the Tod des König Artus the two major tensions in the narrative, Lancelot's adultery and a potential blood feud between the houses of Ban and Artus, surface together. It is true that Lancelot's unwitting killing of Gaheries is a consequence of the suspicion aroused about his adultery, but the issue of Lancelot's adultery is eliminated from the narrative when he returns the Queen to Artus. In accepting the Queen back Artus publicly declares Lancelot free of any accusation of guilt. The issue which is thus left at the centre of the narrative is Gawan's insistence on a blood feud.

Throughout the Prose Lancelot the prose romancer exploits every opportunity to reduce the tension between Lancelot and Artus which results from Lancelot's adultery. Thus, Artus'

obligations towards Lancelot are stressed rather than Lancelot's towards Artus. In a feudal context Artus is guilty of negligence in not going to the assistance of his vassal, Lancelot's father, when Claudas usurped Ban's lands, and Lancelot gives Artus invaluable assistance in his feudal battles. As a knight of the Round Table Lancelot brings great honour to Artus' court. Furthermore, a strong friendship develops between Lancelot and Artus which acts as a counterbalance to Lancelot's offence against Artus in his adultery with Ginover. Indeed, in the Lancelot proper the prose romancer does not confuse Lancelot's love for the Queen with his affection for Artus, but rather allows both emotions to develop alongside one another.

The power of friendship is developed in the Trilogy as another means of enhancing Lancelot's moral stature. One of the remarkable features about Lancelot's personality is his ability to inspire great friendship. Comparison between Galahot, Artus, Claudas and Bandemagus is suggested by their respective relationships with Lancelot and their identity as rulers. Through these men it is made clear that friendship can be a force as powerful as love for a woman, allegiance between lord and vassal and loyalty to one's kin. Precedents are created in the narrative for the loss of relatives at the hands of Ban's kin through the experiences of Bandemagus and Claudas. Their reactions to the loss of their sons form a basis of comparison from which the response of Gawan and Artus to the loss of their kin may be assessed. The pursuit of vengeance by Gawan and Artus forms a parallel with the revenge sought by the treacherous

figure of Claudas, and contrasts unfavourably with the noble conduct of Bandemagus towards his friend Lancelot. The desire of Artus and, in particular, Gawan for revenge is made to appear unreasonable, for Artus has acknowledged Agravant's and Guerehes' disloyalty to the Queen in accepting her back from Lancelot, and Lancelot's slaying of Gaheries was unwitting. The more Gawan seeks revenge, the greater Lancelot's demonstration of his friendship becomes. Even in the context of battle and single combat Lancelot will not endanger the lives of his friends. The nobility of Lancelot's conduct is eventually recognised by both Artus and Gawan, and the final impression of Lancelot in the Prose Lancelot is of a great and humane knight.

The technique of interlacing which is so favoured by the Prose Lancelot romancer creates an essentially acentric composition as the narrative pursues the individual careers of a number of figures. However, in tracing the occurrence of three sets of relationships in the narrative it became clear that many of the main protagonists are closely associated with one another on a thematic level, even if they have little or nothing to do with one another in the narrative action. At the centre of the Prose Lancelot narrative is the ambivalence of Lancelot's involvement with Ginover and Artus, and much of the interest in the narrative lies in how a knight who is guilty of adultery with his friend's wife may be considered worthy of admiration. The prose romancer discarded the persona of a narrator as a means of explicating his work and adopted instead a more oblique approach. The complexities of Lancelot's relations with the King and Queen are

made fundamental to the portrayal of the involvement of other protagonists in the narrative. The use of episodes, incidents and relationships analogous to Lancelot's situation develop the issues raised in his delineation into themes which form the warp and the weft of the narrative. Through the prevalence of analogy in his work the prose romancer encourages associative processes of reasoning, although it must be said that in his efforts to enhance the positive features in Lancelot's portrayal he frequently resorts to moral sophistry.

The society of the Prose Lancelot is structured according to kinship and feudal ties. Thus the main protagonists have a common identity in their social position as kings or knights and in their familial ties. They all have clearly defined personalities, but their actions and experiences are subordinate to a greater pattern of meaning in the narrative. My examination of how the relationships of fathers and sons, brothers and cousins, and friends and rulers are patterned in the Prose Lancelot has revealed that the individual identity of many of the protagonists is integrated into the structure of the Trilogy primarily according to theme. Thus, underlying all the diversity of the Prose Lancelot there is a continuum in the narrative formed by constellations of figures whose function it is to explore and explicate the central paradox of Lancelot's relations with the King and Queen.

Notes to the Conclusion

1. What follows is a partial summary of the survey of research into the structural organisation of the Prose Lancelot which I gave in Ch. 1.
2. See my introductory chapter, p. 16ff.
3. See for example, J.D. Bruce, (review) 'F. Lot, Etude sur le Lancelot en prose (Paris, 1918)', RR, 10 (1919), 377-88 (pp. 384-86).
4. I eagerly await the publication of the third volume of Elspeth Kennedy's Lancelot do Lac. The Non-Cyclic Old French Prose Romance, 2 vols (Oxford, 1980), which will comprise a literary study of how the non-cyclic Prose Lancelot was transformed into part of the Lancelot-Grail cycle (I,vi).
5. See my introductory chapter, p. 5ff.
6. Myrrha Lot-Borodine, 'Tristan et Lancelot', in Medieval Studies in Memory of Gertrude Schoepperle Loomis (Paris/New York, 1927), pp. 21-47 (p. 42).
7. Geoffrey of Monmouth relates in book seven of his Historia regum Britanniae how Merlin made Uther Pendragon look like the Duke of Tintagel so that Uther could lie with the Duke's wife, Ygerne. As a result of their union Arthur was engendered. Arthur did not become legitimate until Uther married Ygerne after the death of the Duke in battle. The same account of Arthur's birth is given in the Estoire de Merlin, edited by H.O. Sommer (Washington, 1908), p. 58ff.

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